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LIVES AND EXPLOITS

OF

BANDITTI AND ROBBERS.







C.M.F. del.

S. Bull. sculp.

The Falls of Rome.

London. Published by Tho' Tegg & Son, Cheapside. 1837.

THE
LIVES AND EXPLOITS
OF
BANDITTI AND ROBBERS
IN
ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.



BY C. MAC FARLANE, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF "CONSTANTINOPLE IN 1829," AND "THE ROMANCE OF ITALIAN HISTORY."

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LIVES OF BANDITTI,

&c.

GENERAL VIEW OF BANDITTI AND ROBBERS.

THERE are few subjects that interest us more generally, than the adventures of robbers and banditti. In our infancy they awaken and rivet our attention as much as the best fairy tales, and when our happy credulity in all things is wofully abated, and our faith in the supernatural fled, we still retain our taste for the adventurous deeds and wild lives of brigands. Neither the fulness of years nor the maturity of experience and worldly wisdom can render us insensible to tales of terror such as fascinated our childhood, nor preserve us from a "creeping of the flesh" as we read or listen to the narrative containing the daring exploits of some robber-chief, his wonderful address, his narrow escapes, and his prolonged crimes, seated by our own peaceful hearth. It is another thing when we hear of these doings on the spots where they have just occurred, and may occur again: for in that case the idea that we may adorn a future tale, instead of telling it, is apt to make attention too painful, and the effect produced will be too intense, and will exceed that certain degree of dread and horror which gives us pleasure in romances,

tragedies, and other efforts of the imagination. If we happen to be well protected at the time and have a tolerable consciousness of security, then indeed we may doubly enjoy these tales on the spots—the solitary heath, the mountain-pass, or the forest—where the facts they relate occurred; but under general circumstances the exploits of a Pepe Mastrillo or a Mazzaroni will not be agreeable entertainment across the Pontine marshes or through the defiles of the Neapolitan frontier. I remember one dark night, in which, with much difficulty, we found our way from the Neapolitan town of San Germano to the village of Sant' Elia, in the bosom of the Apennines; that when a friend (my only companion) suddenly stopped and pointed out a place, and told the story of a robbery, and of a priest's having been murdered there a short time before, I could not help wishing he had kept his anecdote until we were ourselves in a place of safety—nor indeed help feeling rather uncomfortable until a whitefaced chapel on the top of a little detached hill, gleaming through the obscurity, showed us we were near the village we had been so long in search of.

But, to return to robber stories and their effects generally, it may be said that no species of narrative, except, perhaps, that of shipwrecks, produces a deeper impression on people of all ages and conditions. This conviction, and the circumstances of my having passed a number of years in the South of Italy—the land of brigandism *par excellence*—and of having repeatedly visited the wildest parts of that country, and possessed myself there of some curious details, induce me to collect my own materials, and by uniting them to the authentic statements of others, to produce, for a winter evening amusement, a sort of history of Italian banditti. To this I will attach sketches of some famous robbers of other countries, and the most amusing or characteristic adventures I can find. I may venture

to promise the reader, that the first, or Italian Part, will be tolerably complete, and this will serve to convey an idea of the manners and habits of robbers generally.

Before the reader proceeds further, I will warn him, that he will not find my robbers such romantic, generous characters, as those that occasionally figure in the fields of fiction. He will meet with men strangers to that virtuous violence of robbing the rich to give to the poor. They give to the poor indeed, but it is as spies and instruments of their own crimes, or at least in order to induce the poor to remain passive while they carry on their work of depredation against the rich. It could scarcely be deemed great liberality in men, who, fresh from the easy plunder of a treasure, should scatter a few dollars among the needy peasantry, but even these few dollars are given from motives directly selfish. I shall have one touching trait to offer of a robber of the Abruzzi, who respected the person and property not only of a poet but of the poet's companions, who fell into his hands; but among Italian banditti, I never could hear of a Robin Hood, and still less of a refined metaphysical "Robber Moor," that high-minded, romantic hero, of Schiller, who is driven to bold villainy by the paltry, covert vices of society.

The effect Schiller's tragedy of "The Robbers" produced on the romantic youths of Germany is well remembered; they became enamoured of a brigand's life, and thought the loftier and more generous virtues incompatible with a life of dull honesty and submission to the laws of society. But the *beau idéal* that deluded them was only ideal, and in reality robbers no more deliver touching monologues to the setting sun, than they unite elegance and virtue with violence and guilt, and when they took to the forest and the wild, and levied contributions (as several raw students

actually did), they must soon have found they could qualify themselves for the gallows without reaching the sublimities of poetry and sentiment elicited by the fervid imagination of the poet—who, be it recollected, was a stripling like themselves when he wrote “The Robbers.”

The soberer minds of British youth were never led by play, poem, or romance, to such a dangerous imitation; but I can well recall the time, when, with others of my own age, I fancied it one of the most romantic things possible to be a captain of bold banditti, with a forest more leafy than Ardennes for my haunt, and a ruined abbey or castle, or inapproachable cave for my home—with followers so true that they would rather die piecemeal than betray their captain or a comrade, and with the enviable *finale* to every day's perils and adventures—of the jovial banquet, the song, the chorus, and the wild legendary tale, or recital of our own daring deeds. This was the dream of a boy; but even when I was emancipated from the pleasant enthrallments of “The Bandit's Bride,” and similar productions, it was long before I could divest brigandism of its cloke of romance, and see it in its own horrible nakedness. In my own particular case, which I dare say is not a singular one, the charm of banditti-romance, was strengthened and prolonged by the pictures of Salvator Rosa and the prints from that great master and from our own Mortimer; and though I never went quite the length of a young friend, who, on seeing for the first time a savage, rugged mountain pass, with a torrent brawling through it, on the confines of Calabria, expressed a hurried regret that there were not a few of such figures as Salvator depicted, to make it complete: still I rarely could see such a scene without fancying such figures; and as, between Spain and Italy, I wandered a good deal in my youth, in romantic

scenery, the brigands by frequent association of ideas became familiar to me, and were invested with all the picturesqueness of Nature and of the painters. In this manner they were still somewhat ennobled in my eyes.

But even this minor degree of illusion had considerably given way to time and experience, and the stories of the vulgar atrocities of the banditti, which I had heard in Apulia, the Calabrias, the Abruzzi, and the Roman states, when chance brought me in contact and in safe colloquy with an ex-brigand, whose account of his own calling was well calculated to remove the slight degree of romantic feeling with which I could still reflect on the banditti.

I have known ex-ministers, and ex-constitution-makers of various countries, and have made my bow to more than one ex-king; but I never was acquainted with more than one notorious and self-confessed ex-robber. The reader will therefore excuse my introducing him with some state and circumstance, and be pleased to take my word, that the scene has not been got up for the occasion, but is truly such as presented itself when I first saw Luca, or, as he was more commonly called, Passo di Lupo (Wolf's-step). Never was scene more romantic or better calculated to revive the visions of boyhood, or early youth. It was in the wild but beautiful regions of Monte Gargano, situated between the vast plains of Apulia, so recently overrun by banditti, and the mountains of the Abruzzi, so celebrated for the same characters in days of old. It was near the Adriatic sea and the old town of Peschici, to whose half-ruined baronial castle I had gone with the Neapolitan nobleman, whom, with a great extent of adjoining land, it belonged to. Unlike the indolent, careless class that dream away their lives in the capital between San Carlo and the Corso, my friend had devoted much of his time to a country life, and was busy in trying to improve his estates, one

hundred and fifty miles away from the vanities of Naples. We had been felling trees and making roads on a grand scale, and among our projected improvements had turned our attention to the procuring of water, of which the country stood deplorably in need. There was a lake in the neighbourhood, and a large and fine lake it is, boasting a classical name, moreover; but a dry plain, and a lofty ridge of hills intervened between the Uranus and us, and not a drop of its fluid could we procure thence for our improvements. We had dug a well of appalling depth, but no water would make its appearance. We had repaired the large, rude reservoirs, or open tanks, which caught the rain-water as it fell, and seriously thought of digging and building a new one, when we were led to a fine old tank which existed just where we wanted it, but which the indolent inhabitants had neglected so long that it was useless, and its existence almost unknown. Our object now was to clean out this, and so to coat the stone-wall or lining within it, as to prevent the precious fluid from escaping by oozing through it. This promised to be a work of no trifling difficulty, for the old reservoir, which might have been some forty feet in diameter by thirty deep, was grown full of rough, thick bushes, briars, and underwood, whilst three considerable trees had shot up in the midst—the whole offering that tenacity of root and richness and rankness of vegetation that distinguish a southern climate. However, when three or four woodmen had worked a whole day within the rude circle, what with cutting and slashing, and hewing with the axe, there was considerable havoc made—and then we determined to finish the work by applying fire. A small quantity of dry wood, and the sun-dried husks and flags of the Indian corn were thrown in among the lopped branches and the still green boughs and bushes. We waited till some time after sun-set for the *terrano* or perio-

dical wind that blew very freshly down a narrow valley, and then applied the match. A smouldering fire, accompanied by a disagreeable pungent sensation, affecting both eyes and nostrils, was soon succeeded by a broad flash of flame, and what seemed almost a general and simultaneous ignition of the contents of our old reservoir. My friend and myself were soon fain to quit the edge of the hollow circle, and to take our station at some yards distance. Now the fire hissed and crackled, and the flames rose up as though they had proceeded from the crater of a volcano; and what added to the hellishness of the mighty cauldron, was a number of unfortunate serpents that had long held their undisturbed home in the rank hollow, and now hissed with the flames, and darted through the fire, seeking in vain to escape from the tank, or to find a spot where the fire was not already, or fast approaching. To our own labourers, who crowded round the spot, were soon added groups of peasants from the neighbourhood, and a wilder, more picturesque set of fellows can hardly be found, than the peasantry of Monte Gargano. I have seen by night charcoal-burners in the forests of that country, that might very well have been taken for the fiends of German superstition that haunt the Hartz forest, pursuing the same occupation. But the magnificent conflagration we had lighted far surpassed the blaze of a charcoal pyre; and as the blood-red light which beamed upwards from the deep tank that was soon for the greater part occupied with nothing but glowing embers, struck on the expressive faces of the spectators, all turned towards it, and on the green boughs of lofty trees which grew round the tank; and now and then, as the night wind roared over the hollow, fiercer than the seven-times-heated furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, when a flame would tower up, higher than the topmost tree of the forest, as if it would

invade the deep blue Midsummer-night sky, where a crescent moon and the quiet pale stars seemed wondering at what we were doing, the effect produced was of the most striking and even awful character. I have spoken of forest-trees :—I should have said before that the old reservoir was on the *lisière* or edge of a forest, which for extent and wildness, and the sublime height of its trees, I have never seen surpassed.

Whilst enjoying this scene and watching the peasants who formed so important a part of it, I was struck with the appearance of a fellow with the deep scar of an old wound across his swarthy brow, and his left arm in a sort of sling. “Oh! that is Passo di Lupo,” said my friend’s factor, when I asked who he was; “that is Passo di Lupo, who was a long time a brigand, and out with the Vardarelli.” (These Vardarelli were the very Còryphei of modern banditti, of whom more anon.) “Indeed!” said I rather surprised; “then what does he here?”

“He returned with others to society,” said the factor, “some years ago, when the Government of King Ferdinand, that could not suppress them, offered a free pardon to all who would lay down their arms and accept it.”

I said he was a ferocious-looking fellow, or made some similar remark; to which the factor replied, that such was the effect of his former life, but now he was not so bad as he looked; that he was true to his salt, and as for honesty, he might be sent from Peschici to Manfredonia (as nice a road for a robbery as can well be conceived!) with uncounted gold—in short, such were his good moral qualities, and his activity and capability of bearing fatigue, that the factor thought of recommending him to his master, as a *guardiano**.

On my expressing a wish to know more about him,

* *Guardiani*, are *gardes champêtres*. They are nearly always armed for the protection of the property on their masters’ estates.

the factor began his story; but by this time, the fire was almost burned out, the tank was almost cleaned, save of a copious residue of cinders and ashes, and my friend, who had heard too many of these stories to care about them, was anxious for his bed. Accordingly we rode back to our quarters in the old castle (where, from my bed-room window I could drop a stone plump into the deep Adriatic), the factor telling me as we went, that if I chose, he would send Passo di Lupo to me on the morrow to relate his own adventures. The ex-robber, he said, was averse to doing this, except now and then in a cosy corner, with a particular friend or two, but no doubt would oblige me, particularly if I would say a word or so in his favour to the Prince as to the place of *guardiano*, which he was desirous of obtaining.

It was not, however, on the next day, nor was it till several days after, and when I was thinking of very different matters, that the fellow I had seen by the reservoir made his bow to me as I was mounting my horse for a ride in the forest. The factor had prepared him to be communicative.

The first direct question I asked him was, what had induced him to be a brigand? His answer was truly characteristic; for I scarcely ever heard of a career of crime in Italy but what had its origin in the passion of love, and, odd as it may appear, I never knew a Neapolitan speak of assassination, otherwise than as a misfortune that had happened to him in committing it.

“Please your excellency,” said the fellow, “I was making love with a Paesana, and had the misfortune to give a blow of the knife (*un botto di coltello*) to one I thought my rival!”

From his narrative it appeared that this blow had been mortal, and the judicial authorities, so injudicious and unreasonable as to *persecute* him who had dealt it; on which he had fled, and after having been hunted

from place to place, and put to great straits, he had repaired to the band of robbers, commanded by the brothers Vardarelli, whose general haunt was about the Ponte di Bovino, a defile in the mountains not above thirty miles from his own home in Monte Gargano.

He was not received with open arms as he expected, but, on the contrary, was watched with a jealous eye; nor was it for some time, and until after hearing mass celebrated by a priest who was in league with the banditti, and after taking a most terrific oath, that he was admitted into their ranks, and allowed to accompany them in their excursions.

I thought the fellow's hawk-like eyes still beamed joyfully as he talked of stopping Government mails and diligences, and rich farmers and graziers from the fairs of Foggia; and as he told me, how, at times, he had scoured the whole plain of Apulia, and crossed the mountains of Basilicata, and plunged into other provinces—meeting nowhere a formidable resistance—nearly everywhere an impunity of plunder. But when I questioned him as to the division and disposal of that plunder, and how he lived the while, the expression of his countenance was decidedly sad. It appeared that a bolder few, or the bullies, or what he called in Neapolitan language, the *guappi* of the honest community, invariably possessed themselves of the lion's share of the spoil, leaving to the inferiors of the band less than the jackal's garbled portion. And even the money that was doled out to him, he could not enjoy it! It was rarely he could venture into a town to exchange it for the dress, and commodities or little luxuries he desired—in general, he lost it, quicker than he won it, with his comrades at cards. At times, with good dollars in his girdle, he could not procure a dish of maccaroni, or a draught of good wine. The robbers were frequently so hard pressed, that the sheep

they stole were rudely roasted entire (wool, skin, garbage and all), or even torn to pieces and devoured at once, whilst the flesh was still quivering with life. They were, for the most part, obliged to hide themselves in wild forests, in mountain caves, or in mountain villages, in inaccessible places, scarcely less horrid—alternately cajoling and murdering the wretched peasants—now relying on them as trusty accomplices, and now dreading to be betrayed by them into the hands of justice. My interlocutor said, that the effect of this ever-watchful, precarious mode of life, was such on him, that for years after he had quitted it, he could never enjoy a sound sleep in his bed, but that he was constantly starting up convulsively, and shrieking out his former companions' names.

The robbers felt themselves at war with all mankind, and they were not at peace even among themselves. Their quarrels were frequent and violent, and generally ended—as they were likely to do with men so familiarized with crime—in blood and death. So far from placing confidence in each other, a party was never beyond its time in reaching the place of rendezvous, or a single brigand missed in the band, than the most agonizing apprehensions of treachery and surprise agitated the mass.

Some of the robbers were supplied with wives or innamorate of their own—the rest helped themselves where and when they could. This was the most fertile ground of strife, and the tales which Passo di Lupo told me may be fancied, but are much too atrocious to be repeated. From his account, with the exception of the Vardarelli, the bandit chiefs, and of a few others, the robbers of the Ponte di Bovino were abominable, disgusting, and utterly detestable monsters—sunk, by their crimes and excesses, and the habitual practices of their daily lives, beneath the level of the beasts of the forests, where they concealed themselves.

Though they carefully shunned, they could not always escape encounters with the Government troops, or with individuals who had courage to defend themselves; and to cure the wounds they received in these conflicts, and those (perhaps quite as frequent) they inflicted on each other in their *visse*, or quarrels, they had no surgeon—no appropriate dressings or medicines; so that a wound that would have been no ways dangerous in the hands of skill, often proved mortal to them, and the bodies and members of many of them were literally covered with nauseous, festering sores, produced by neglect or injudicious treatment.

The gash in the head of my worthy interlocutor, Passo di Lupo, had been cured (so he informed me) by the application of some cotton that had been rubbed against a miraculous statue of a Madonna in the town of Canosa. But he had been less fortunate with a wound in his left arm, that had nearly occasioned his losing the use of it, and which now, so long after, he was endeavouring to rectify with that panacea of the Neapolitan peasantry—an enormous blister, which covered it from the shoulder-blade almost to the elbow-joint. This is the *resumé* of all that I remember interesting in the recital of the ex-brigand; but, lest an interest may have arisen in my reader as to his own fate, I may add, that he was received in my friend's service, in which he comported himself in such a manner as to justify the factor's eulogium. The last time I saw him, he was one of a small escort that accompanied us by night through the said forests of Monte Gargano.

In looking over the different countries infested by banditti, it will strike us that their existence may almost be reduced to a branch of statistics and geography. Certain districts, as formed by nature, seem of themselves to suggest the trades of robbery and piracy; and where the progress of good govern-

ment, civilization, prosperity, and population, have not corrected the dangerous facility, it will be found that robbers and pirates pursue their calling now, as they have done in all ages, in certain spots which offer favourable points of attack and retreat. For example, the mountainous frontier of the Neapolitan kingdom has never been free from robbers, nor the coast of Dalmatia and of Greece from pirates; they have risen and flourished there in all ages, like natural products of the soil. The application of external force can only suppress the evil for a while; and until the improvements I have mentioned in the people themselves take place, they will never be able wholly to withstand the temptation offered them by their geographical positions. If the reader compare other spots with these two, chosen *par excellence*, he will find the same physical causes producing the same effects, except where they have met with the moral check. Frontiers generally are, of all places, the most obnoxious to brigandism: it is so easy for the criminals to evade pursuit, by constantly keeping themselves (to use a military phrase) *à cheval* on the line of demarcation of the two countries, and when pursuit is hot in the one, by retreating into the other. If the frontiers are mountainous, it seems almost impossible they can be honest, until the contiguous States are both highly advanced in civilization.

And here it may be remarked, that when a people, through their vices, cease to avail themselves of the natural advantages of a mountainous frontier, these advantages become curses; the rugged rocks and deep narrow passes, whence they ought to have defied invading armies, will be peopled with cut-throats of their own; and the bulwarks of national liberty, to which every eye ought to be directed with pride and conscious security, will be converted into strong-holds of banditti, and regarded with fear and trembling.

Where a country is divided into many little states, and has a large portion of mountainous territory withal, like Italy, matters are likely to be so much the worse, in proportion to the number of frontiers. There the traveller is not only exposed to the certain vexations arising from custom-house and police officers, and changes of currency, but to the probable and more serious annoyance of robbers, at nearly every transit from one petty state to another. He will find even that a country such as Tuscany, all order and honesty in its interior, has brigands on its frontiers.

There is a closer connexion between custom-house officers and banditti than at first strikes the eye. The former are placed along a frontier to prevent smuggling, and the men who carry on the dangerous but profitable trade of defrauding them, are very apt to unite the calling of robbery with smuggling, and to merge into brigands. From one infraction of the law to another is but a step; and it must be remarked, that many Governments are infinitely more severe to the smugglers, who cheat them of their revenue, than to the banditti, who only plunder their subjects. When I was in Spain, it was notorious that the robber on the highway, that even the murderer, who fell into the hands of—I cannot say justice—the authorities, had a much better chance of escaping punishment, than the runners of tobacco. This was because tobacco, as in most of the countries of the Continent, was a Royal monopoly. It cannot, therefore, excite surprise that the Spanish contrabanderos, particularly when irritated by seizures of their goods, and by losses and pursuit, should unite to an offence against the laws of customs and excise, which met with the surest and severest punishment, a crime, which of itself was less harshly visited, and which could scarcely augment the punishment incurred by smuggling when superadded to it.

The conquest of the whole, or a part of a country,

by a foreign race, leads very naturally to brigandism. Not to multiply examples, this was the case in Spain, on the conquest of the Moors; and in the Calabrias, which, for many centuries, saw the kingdom of which it formed a part, in the hands of foreign conquerors; now one race, now another; now the Spaniards, now the French—and all odious.

During the last war, even, it was not always easy for an impartial observer to draw a line between the guerillas and freebooters in Spain, and the patriots and brigands in Calabria, and other parts of the Italian peninsula. It could hardly be expected that the French should make a very delicate distinction! According to them they were *all*, and at all times, robbers, which was false; but it is perfectly true, particularly in Italy, that many unfortunate counter-revolutionists became so under the force of circumstances, and continued so, in part, when the circumstances had ceased to exist.

It may be remarked here, and it will be amply shown in the course of the narratives, that the abuse of the Catholic religion, with its confessions and absolutions, has tended indirectly to promote crime. But priests and monks have not done half the mischief which has been perpetrated by ballad-mongers, and story-tellers, and popular traditions, that have made the adventures of famous outlaws one of their favourite and principal subjects, and have described them rather with an eye to effect, than to truth or morality.

Throughout Italy these ballads and stories are almost as numerous as accounts of miracles and legends of Saints. They are among the first things learned in childhood; their continual repetition familiarises the mind with lawless deeds, whilst their spirit of adventure has a strong fascination for a very sensitive and a very ignorant people.

“Let who will make the laws of a country,” says

the Scotch patriot, Fletcher of Saltoun, "let me make the ballads, and I will form the people." A little reflection will show how much is contained in this remark. Were a proof required to support it, I would point to the nature of the general run of Italian ballads, and to the character of the Italian people. And were I a despot as potent as a Chinese emperor*, I would decree the destruction of all their ballads relating to brigandism, and would punish every teller of a story, or a tradition on that subject—at least until the country were civilized, when they might be "said and sung" with no more evil consequences than attend the singing or recital of "Johnnie Armstrong," or "The bold Robin Hood," among us.

It is of course in the Roman and Neapolitan states, where, of all Italy, banditti have most flourished, that this species of ballad most abounds—where it is a consequence, and a cause.

Mrs. Maria Graham, now Mrs. Calcot, to whom I am happy at this early stage of my labours to acknowledge my obligations, gives in the Appendix to her delightful work, "Three Months passed in the Mountains East of Rome," a list of some of the especial favourites of the Roman populace, with translations of passages from them. She might have made the list much longer, but I shall avail myself here only of two of those she has given, which will explain my meaning as to their effects, and show the nature of the banditti-ballad.

1. A new History, in which is related the life led by Giuseppe Mastrilli, of Terracina, who, being in love, committed many murders, and was banished from the States of Rome and Naples, on pain of being drawn and quartered; and who, having escaped during his life from the hands of Justice, died quietly in his bed, repenting of his evil deeds.

* An emperor of China actually made a decree by which *all* books (except a few sacred ones) written before his time, were to be committed to the flames.

This is the opening of the piece I have heard sung a thousand times ; the version is from Mrs. Calcot's volume.

“ Nella bella città di Terracina
 Nacque quest' uomo di sottil ingegno
 Ricco di beni, e pieno di dottrina,
 Stupore in Roma e pregiudizio al regno.
 Menò la vita sua da Paladino ;
 Sempre contro la corte ebbe l' impegno
 Li misfatti che fece, e il suo furore
 Causa già fu per contentare amore.

Passò un giorno Mastrilli da una strada,
 Vide ad una fenestra una zitella,
 Parve agli occhi suoi sì bella e grata
 Candida più che mattutina stella ;
 L' ha con un bacio mano salutata
 E poi amorosamente gl'ì favella
 Vide suo padre e per saziar sue voglie
 Li fece dir, che la volea per moglie.”

“ Within fair Terracina's beauteous bound
 Was born a man, whose like is seldom found ;
 In substance rich, and full of learned lore,
 Terror of Rome, and Naples troubling sore.
 He led a life as free as those of old
 Hight Paladins ; but all his actions bold
 Were levell'd against justice : these, how'er,
 With all his crimes, were for a lady fair.

One morn it chanced that Mastrilli must pass
 Near where an open window show'd a lass,
 That to his charmed eye seem'd fairer far,
 And brighter than the early morning star.
 By signs he made his admiration known,
 And spoke of love, and hoped to make his own
 The lovely maid ; then to her father went,
 And for the wedding sought his due consent.”

Unfortunately for Peppe Mastrilli and mankind, this “ Gentle Zitella ” was inspired with a passion for another. No sooner had Peppe made this discovery than he killed his rival, and thus began in an essentially Italian manner his career of crime. The father of the murdered lover went to Frosinone and

laid his complaint before the Bishop, who sent twelve sbirri to apprehend Mastrilli, with the promise of three hundred crowns reward in case of their succeeding.

“ From Frosinone speedily were sent
Twelve sbirri, armed with desperate intent,
A brave lieutenant, and a skilful spy,
To show where Peppe Mastrilli did lie.

But they did not succeed. They tracked him to his hiding-place near Cisterna, and met him as he was coming out of a wood belonging to the Prince of Caserta. Instead of fleeing, the desperate homicide, invoking the aid of the Madonna, attacked the sbirri and killed four of the twelve. The rest, with the lieutenant at their head, ran away. Peppe then did what was natural for him to do in such circumstances; he fled to the frontier to seek a refuge in the kingdom of Naples, which States he speedily entered, after killing two guards, and made his way towards Gaeta. In the neighbourhood of that city he entered the hut of a poor fisherman whose wife had just been brought to bed of a son, to whom, wishing to secure his host's assistance, he stood godfather, after telling his story, which must have convinced the fisherman and his dame, that Peppe Mastrilli, the murderer, was well calculated to take upon himself the office of Christian sponsor. The fisherman desired him to eat ^{and} drink, while he went out to attend his boat;—but he went straight and betrayed Peppe, who was taken, loaded with chains, and sent on board the galleys. But only three days after, when he artfully told his story to “The General of the Galley-slaves,” that distinguished personage ordered his irons to be struck off, and advanced him to the command of twelve hundred of his fellows. When seven years, however, had passed, the Court of Rome demanded the criminal: and Peppe was again bound, and sent by sea towards

Rome. It happened that a certain Princess was going at the same time in another galley, and being alarmed during a storm, she insisted on landing: she saw—she pitied the state of Peppe Mastrilli, and commanded that he should be instantly liberated. Very opportunely, this happened close to Terracina, the murderer's native place. The outlaw knocked at his own door, where his two sons received him with transports of joy. To these "chips of the old block" he related his adventures since the time that love and murder had driven him from home; and forthwith, father and sons set off for Gaeta to take vengeance on the perfidious fisherman—"who had sinned against St. John the Baptist, by betraying his child's godfather." It need hardly be added that they murdered him barbarously.

Their next exploit, which showed that Peppe Mastrilli was not so grateful as he was resentful, was to waylay and capture the General of the galleys, for whom they obtained a ransom of three thousand golden crowns. Thus enriched, Mastrilli acted as a faithful guide to Prince Corsini in a perilous journey; in reward for which the Prince gave him his letters of protection. He might now have led a peaceful life, but, meeting shortly after some travelling merchants on the road, the temptation was too strong for him, and he divided their property with them. For this, certain rivals in the trade denounced him to the court. Peppe and his sons were pursued by sbirri: they gave battle, and

"For full four hours on that eventful day,
Each Christian trembled that around them lay:
A sky of lead, an earth of fire was seen,
And nine bold men lay dead upon the green."

After this dreadful combat, Mastrilli and his sons went to Rome, whence having obtained fresh letters

of protection, they repaired to Leghorn. At Leghorn they found a ship ready to sail, and embarked in her for Terracina. Arrived once more at his native place, an illness which had attacked Peppe at sea, increased so much, that he sent for a priest and confessed himself. Lest the priest should reveal his crimes, Mastrilli's sons kept the holy man a close prisoner till their father expired.

As soon as the officer of the *sbirri* heard of Peppe's demise, he went to the house in which he had died, fired at the corpse, and then cut off the head to obtain the reward. His sons, in great grief at these events, prevail on the priest to write to Rome, to certify that Mastrilli had confessed, and received absolution before death;—upon which the false officer is condemned to the galleys, and the memory of Mastrilli cleared from the stain of an impenitent death.

Such is the story of the most popular of all the brigand ballads, and being rounded off, by confession and absolution, it makes the robber and murderer an object of sympathy and admiration to the populace. To say nothing of what they deem the inevitable fate of the deceased in another world, the poor Italians think there is more disgrace in this, attached to an impenitent death, or death without confession, than to all the crimes, however atrocious or disgusting they may be, a man can crowd into his life. And this disgrace, they think, falls upon a man's descendants and relations.

2. The most beautiful History of the life and death of Pietro Mancino, Chief of Banditti; wherein are set forth the captures for ransom, and the murders that he committed in the kingdom of Naples.

Many of these ballads open after the classical fashion, with a regular invocation of the Muses: the present begins thus:

“ Io canto li ricatti, e il fiero ardire
 Del gran Pietro Mancino fuoruscito,
 Quanti nemici suoi faceva morire
 In tutto il tempo ch' è stato bandito ;
 Perdonatemi Muse, in questo dire
 Se non vi chiamo all' Eliconio sito
 Che parlando di guerra, mie carte
 Di Bellona la Musa, Apollo è Marte.”

Peter Mancino, that great outlaw'd man,
 I sing, and all his rage—and how he ran
 Throughout the land, seeking his foes to slay,
 Or take, and on them ransom hard to lay.
 Forgive, O Muse ! if, in my dire account,
 I call thee not from Heliconian fount !
 So fierce my tale, Mars must Apollo be,
 And harsh Bellona is the muse for me.

“ And, indeed,” as Mrs. Calcot observes, “ Pietro Mancino deserves a loftier song than most banditti.” He was the son of a learned and much respected physician, and, as well as his two sisters, remarkable for his personal beauty. Here, again, we have a truly Italian beginning. The beauty of his sisters inflamed the passions of two Princes of the land, and it was to save them from their lust, that Pietro Mancino committed his first murders on the persons of the said Princes. The next natural step was to turn robber, and, according to the ballad, as he could not hope for mercy, seeing the rank of his victims, he fled and joined a band of bold outlaws. He ought to have respected his father's profession ; but his first victim in his new calling was a Doctor : he next seized a Factor. From each of these he received three thousand crowns of ransom,—with part of which he succoured persons in distress, and more particularly *women*. The Prince of San Severo, a powerful Neapolitan nobleman, offered a reward of twelve thousand crowns for the head of Pietro Mancino. This handsome sum Pietro determined to obtain himself, keeping his head on his own shoulders. Accordingly he disguised himself, and taking a raw sheep's head under

his mantle, went to the Prince, and having only partially shown the blooded sheep's head, received the money. When he got it safe in his clutches, he laughed at the Prince, and informed him of the cheat that had been practised upon him. He then hastened to his companions, and having made their slight preparations, they embarked altogether for the coast of Dalmatia, where they lived in a generous and most hospitable manner. When their means drew near exhaustion, they crossed the Adriatic sea, landed on the coast of Apulia, and made incursions in that province to raise more money. Their first exploit on their return to Italy, was to disguise themselves as monks, and to visit the head of a rich monastery, from whom they obtained three thousand crowns. (It must be remarked, that three thousand crowns—*tre mila scudi*—is a pet sum with the Italian writers of banditti songs.) There was a traitor in the band, who had arranged a plan for betraying the captain; but the dexterous Pietro Mancino not only detected this Judas, but forced him to pay him twice three thousand crowns. Shortly after this he intercepted half a million of gold, on its way to the Viceroy of Naples; and being now well provided with funds for the support of his generous and hospitable mansion across the Adriatic, he retreated through the province of Apulia, to Barletta, and embarked again for Dalmatia, where he had a stately castle, and where he continued to live like a beneficent Prince. When the conquering Turks besieged Corfu, he assisted the Christians in the defence of that island. At length, just like Peppe Mastrilli, he was taken ill, and in due course,

A Pietro intanto il male si aggravava
 E da se stesso lo conosceva
 Che giorno e notte chiamava, e pregava
 Per avvocata Maria, che teneva,

Perchè sempre il sabbato guardava
 E mai peccato non vi commetteva.
 Maria chiamava, e bagnava le gote
 Rese l' anima à Dio col sacerdote.

Peter meanwhile perceived the time draw nigh,
 When he must make his soul prepare to die,
 And night and day he call'd on Heaven's queen,
 His advocate, to whom he'd faithful been ;
 And still had kept her day from sin most clear,
 And Saturdays alone, throughout the year,
 He wrought no ill. On Mary then he cried,
 And weeping with his priest, in penance died.

These two ballads are by far the greatest favourites of this much-admired class of composition. They are, of course, as well known in the Neapolitan kingdom, as at Rome, and in the States of the Church. They are sung in a sort of recitative, monotonous *cantilena* style, which is not very pleasant as music, but which permits every word to be most distinctly heard. Long as they are, (and I have heard a version of Peppe Mastrilli longer than "Chevy Chase,") they rivet the attention of their audience, as though their words were magical spells. I have often seen a group of peasants gathered round an ambulatory lyrist, and never take their eyes from him, nor move, nor speak, until the robber chief was confessed, absolved, and fairly dead, when shouts of applause, and the donations of fractions of a penny, would testify their extreme delight.

The Neapolitans have also many robber stories in prose and verse, exclusively their own. Among these the most famous are about Frà Diavolo, or Friar-Devil, of whom I shall say a word or two, anon; Marcone, of Calabria, who styled himself "King Marcone;" "Benedetto Mangone, of Eboli," and "Marco Sciarra, of the Abruzzi," whose adventures I shall give at length, as (unlike the others) they are detailed in history.

The story of Benedetto Mangone is, indeed, a *bonne bouche* in its way, as related in the popular manner, where history is mingled with tradition.

The scene of his exploits was principally the Campagna d' Eboli, in which the sublime ruins of the temples of Pæstum stand, and "where," says the historian Giannone, "his memory is still fresh and infamous, from the number of atrocious crimes he there committed." He is said to have made the temples of the Greek divinities, which were then, and long after his time, surrounded with thick woods, like those that now grow around Persano, his head-quarters, and to have sacrificed the victims of his revenge, and such as could not pay their ransoms, in those once holy recesses, which became human shambles. He ended his crimes, as, in all probability, he had begun them, through love.

He was taken by the soldiers of the Spanish Viceroy, who then ruled the kingdom of Naples, as he was attempting to decoy, or force a beautiful peasant girl from the town of Salerno. On arriving at the city of Naples, to the very gates of which he had often carried terror, he was most barbarously tortured, and then beaten to death with hammers.

I remember being in the neighbourhood of Eboli, shortly after the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Hunt, which was perpetrated unintentionally by some novices and bunglers in brigandism, near to the temples of Pæstum, in 1823. It was before the criminals were taken. On speaking with some honest peasants on the subject, and describing to them (what I had seen and admired, only a few days before, on a gay excursion to Mount Vesuvius,) the youth, the beauty, and happiness of the English couple, who were both killed by one ball, they shook their heads, and said it must have been either the devil, or another Benedetto

Mangone, who had done the deed. A hundred years and more had passed since Giannone had written, but the robber's fame was fresh as ever.

The great civilizers of countries are your road-makers. A MacAdam in Calabria would do more in suppressing banditti, than twenty sanguinary governors, such as the French General Manhes, whose proceedings I shall have occasion to detail. Wherever good communications have been opened, the brigands have gradually withdrawn. This I have seen myself in Calabria, in Apulia, and in the Abruzzi. That this indeed *should* be the case will strike everybody, but it is so in a degree which can hardly be understood by those who have not seen it. The sight of a new broad road seems to produce the same bewildering, terrifying impression on an Italian robber, that the magical mirror of Ruggiero did on the eyes of his enemies. There must certainly be some superstitious dread mingled with the reasonable apprehensions of these robbers—some *jettatura**, attached, in their idea, to new roads.

I remember once having to pass a district (not far from Taranto, the ancient Tarentum) which had long borne an infamous reputation. On speaking to a gentleman of the country, he assured me there were now no grounds for apprehension—that the Government had finished a *strada nuova* three months before, and that not a single robbery had been heard of since. Indeed, I almost invariably observed in travelling in the provinces of the kingdom of Naples, that the spirits of my guides, or muleteers, revived as we came to a

* A superstition much more common among the Neapolitans than that of the evil-eye among the people of the Levant, and more absurd. It may be said to be a mysterious influence proceeding from things animate and inanimate, and producing bad luck, but it would take a volume to describe it. There exists, indeed, a volume on the subject (and an amusing one it is!) by the Neapolitan Advocate, Nicolo Valletta.

bit of new road, and that they spoke of it as a haven of safety.

Hoping these brief general observations may not have fatigued the reader's patience, I shall now proceed to the most amusing and authentic narratives of banditti I can collect, begging him to bear in mind, that robbers, like the heroes before the time of Homer, are frequently lost in obscurity—that history has disdained to record their exploits, which are only to be collected in the scenes which witnessed them, and from the occasional accounts of travellers.

THE ROBBER OF THE ABRUZZI.

“OF no avail,” says the excellent Neapolitan historian Giannone, “was the horrid spectacle of the tortures and death of the chief Mangone; for very shortly after the kingdom was disturbed by the incursions of the famous Marco Sciarra, who, imitating Marcone of Calabria, called himself ‘*Re della Campagna*,’ or ‘King of the open country,’ and asserted his Royal prerogative at the head of six hundred robbers.”

Favoured by his position in the mountains of the Abruzzi, and on the confines of another government—the Papal States, which for many years have been the promised land of brigandism—this extraordinary robber attained the highest eminence in his profession. His band, so formidable in itself, always acted in concert with other bands of banditti in the Roman States; they aided each other by arms and counsel; and in case of the Romans being pressed on their side, they could always retreat across the frontier line to their allies in the Abruzze, while, in the same predicament,

the Abruzzese could claim the hospitality of the worthy subjects of the Pope.

The same circumstances have strengthened the banditti in our own days, and rendered the country between Terracina and Fondi, or the frontiers of the Papal States, and the Kingdom of Naples, the most notorious district of all Italy for robbers.

But Marco Sciarra was moreover favoured by other circumstances, and he had the grasp of mind to comprehend their importance, to avail himself of them, and to raise himself to the grade of a political partizan—perhaps he aimed at that of a patriot. His native country, as we have explained in the foregoing narrative, was in the hands of foreigners, and most despotically governed by Viceroys from Spain, who were generally detested by the people, and frequently plotted against by some of the nobility, who, instead of assisting to put down the *fuorusciti*, would afford them countenance and protection, when required, in their vast and remote estates. A great part of the rest of Italy was almost as badly governed as the kingdom, and consequently full of malcontents, of men of desperate fortunes, who, in many instances, forwarded the operations of the robbers, and not unfrequently joined their bands. An accession like theirs added intelligence, military skill, and political knowledge, to the cause of the rude mountaineers of the Abruzzi.

In the course of a few months after the death of Benedetto Mangone, Marco Sciarra had committed such ravages, and made himself so formidable, that the whole care of the Government was absorbed by him, and every means in its power employed for his destruction.

In the spring of 1588, he had retreated with his band, before a force of Government troops, into the States of the Church, which the Vice-Royalists could not invade without the permission of the Pope. In

the month of April, the Viceroy, Don Giovan di Zunica Conte di Miranda, applied to the Holy See for an immediate renewal of an old *concordate*, by which the commissaries and the troops of either government were authorised to have free ingress and egress in the Neapolitan Kingdom and the Papal States, to pursue robbers, crossing the respective frontiers as often as might be necessary, and by which the two States were pledged reciprocally to aid each other in the laudable duty of suppressing all bandits and bad livers, (*mal viventi*.) The Pope, Sixtus VI., complied with this reasonable request, by granting a Breve for three months. Immediately the troops of the Viceroy Miranda crossed the frontiers in pursuit of Sciarra, who, being properly informed by numerous friends and spies of all that passed, turned back into the kingdom about the same time that his enemies quitted it; and avoiding the pass of Antrodoro, where the Spaniards were in force, he went through the defile of Tagliacozzi, and was soon safe in the mountain solitudes that surround the beautiful lake of Celano.

The robber had the sympathies of all the peasantry on his side, and found friends and guides everywhere. Not so the Spanish commander in pursuit of him, who did not learn whereabouts he was until several days after, when some fugitive soldiers brought him word that Marco Sciarra was in the kingdom, and had just sacked the town of Celano, cutting to pieces a detachment of troops that had arrived there. The Spaniard then recrossed the frontier of the kingdom, but nearly a whole day before he reached the country about Celano, Sciarra was again beyond the borders.

He had now, however, considerable difficulties to encounter. The officer had left a body of bold men behind him in the Papal States, and these had been joined by several commissaries of the Pope, who each led a number of soldiers, and carried with him his

Holiness's command to the faithful, not to harbour, but to assist to take the Neapolitan banditti wherever they might be. Sciarra had not expected so formidable an array on the side of Rome against him: he was several times hard pressed by the troops, but the peasantry, spite of the injunctions of the successor of Saint Peter, still continued his faithful friends. The historians who relate these events, especially record, that wherever he went, the robber was [kind in conversation, and generous in action with the poor, giving, but never taking from them; and paying for whatever his band took with much more regularity, than did the officers of the Spanish troops. Consequently he was advised by some peasant or other of the approach of every foe, of every ambuscade of the troops, of every movement they made; and he finally escaped them all, keeping two forces, which might almost be called armies, at bay, the one on the Roman confine, the other on the Neapolitan, for more than a week.

He then threw himself back on the mountains of Abruzzi, where, by keeping himself in the most inaccessible places, with his men scattered in the most opportune spots, and regular sentinels stationed and guards distributed, he had invariably the advantage over the enemy. Indeed, whenever the troops mustered courage to approach his strong-holds, which he was in the habit of changing frequently, they were sure to return considerably diminished in number, and without the satisfaction, not only of killing, but even of seeing one of the robbers, whose arquebuses from behind rocks, or the shelter of forests and thickets, had so sure an aim.

Six months passed—the soldiers were worn out. The Spanish officer, who first led them on the useless hunt, was dead in consequence of a wound received from the robbers. Winter approached, which is felt in all its rigour on the lofty bleak mountains of the

Abruzzi; the commissaries, with their men on the other side, had long since returned to their homes at Rome; and the Viceroy's people now went to theirs at Naples.

After these transactions, Marco Sciarra was deemed all but invincible: his fame sung in some dozen of ballads, strengthened his *prestige* in the eyes of the peasantry: his band was reinforced, and he was left to reign a king, at least of the Abruzzi, and undisturbed for many months.

It was about this time that the robber-chief's life was ornamented with its brightest episode. Marco and his merry men had come suddenly on a company of travellers on the road between Rome and Naples. The robbers had begun to plunder, and had cut the saddle-girths of the mules and horses of the travellers, who had speedily obeyed the robbers' order, and lay flat on the earth, all save one, a man of striking and elegant appearance.

"Faccia in terra!" cried several of the robbers in the same breath, but the bold man, heedless of their menaces, only stepped up to Marco their chief, and said, "I am Torquato Tasso." "The poet!" said the robber, and he dropped on his knee, and kissed his hand; and not only was Tasso saved from being plundered by the mere mention of his name, but all those who were travelling with him were permitted to mount their horses and continue their journey without sustaining the loss of a single scudo. A very curious proof this, that a captain of banditti could form a juster and more generous notion of what was due to the immortal, but then unfortunate poet, than could Princes of royal or imperial lineage.

The Viceroy was stung to the quick by the failure of his expedition, of whose success he had been so certain, that the Court of Spain was given to understand their kingdom of Naples had nothing more to

fear from the incursions of banditti ; that the head of Marco Sciarra would soon decorate one of the niches in the Capuan gate. But Miranda was a man of energy, and in 1590 he renewed his attempt to exterminate the robbers. Four thousand men, between infantry and cavalry, marched this time into the Abruzzi, under the command of Don Carlo Spinelli. As the Abruzzese peasantry saw this formidable army enter their pastoral districts by Castel di Sangro, and traverse the mountain flat, "the plain of five miles," they whispered "The will of God be done! but now it is all over with King Marco!"

Marco Sciarra, however, had no such fears: but came boldly on to an open battle. With his increased forces he threw himself upon Spinelli in the midst of the Viceroy's troops, which were presently disordered; he wounded with his own hand the proud Don, who turned and fled, but so severely wounded, that he was well nigh leaving his life in the mountains whither he had gone to take that of Sciarra. The soldiers followed their commander as best they could, leaving the robbers the full triumph of the field.

Marco Sciarra's courage and audacity were now increased a hundred fold. He fancied he could conquer a kingdom; he invaded other provinces, and marching across the mountains of the Abruzzi, he traversed those of the Capitanata, sacking, without meeting with opposition, the towns of Serra Capriola and Vasto. Nor did he stop here: for he descended into the vast plain of Apulia, and took and pillaged the city of Lucera, a very considerable place, situated near the edge of the plain. The Bishop of Lucera, who fled for refuge to one of the church towers, was unfortunately shot, as he presented himself at a window or loop-hole to see what was passing. Without being molested by any attack of the government troops, Marco Sciarra's band leisurely returned from

this extensive predatory excursion loaded with booty, to their Abruzzi mountains, which overlooked Rome, where their enterprising chief renewed his league with the banditti in the States of the Pope, and encouraged them by the flattering picture of his splendid successes. But he had allies more important and dignified than these. The politics of states now became mixed up with his fate.

Alfonso Piccolomini, a nobleman by birth, but one of the many desperate revolutionists Italy has been fertile in the production of—a rebel to his Sovereign the Grand-Duke of Tuscany—had fled to Venice, where he obtained service as a soldier of fortune in the army with which that Republic was then waging war with the Usocchi. This man was enchanted with the stand Sciarra had made against the Pope and the Viceroy, neither of whom, at the time, was in good odour at Venice; and he induced the crafty senators to wink at his corresponding with, and favouring the bold Abruzzese, if he did not even do more, and (working on their jealousies of the power of the Spaniards and of the Pope in Italy) persuade them to assist the outlaw themselves with money and arms.

Marco Sciarra was every day gaining importance and strength by these manœuvres, when a curious change took place. Here I intreat attention to the vindictive feelings, the utter want of principle, of decency, that marked the proceedings of Princes and Potentates in Italy in those days.

The Grand Duke of Tuscany, entertaining the most revengeful feelings against his rebel subject, made it a matter of embassy and degrading supplication to the Venetians that they would not only dismiss from their service, but drive out from their States, Alfonso Piccolomini. But Piccolomini, it was replied, was a man of talent, and as a soldier they were well satisfied with his services.

Marco Sciarra, the Abruzzese (he did not blush to propose a brigand!) was the better man of the two to carry on their wars against the Uscocchi; rejoined the Duke, who did all he could to make them substitute him for Piccolomini. The Venetians, however, turned a deaf ear to these representations, and the Tuscan refugee could defy the wrath of his sovereign as long as he enjoyed their protection. But in an evil hour Piccolomini returned a haughty, if not an insulting answer to the Capi or heads of that mysterious, sanguinary Government. The Senators of Venice were almost as vindictive as the Duke of Tuscany; they dismissed him from their service, and drove him out of their States—when he fell into the snares laid for him by his own sovereign, who put him to a violent death.

The Oligarchy of Venice then thought of Sciarra, and sent to invite him to their service. He was to prosecute the war against the Uscocchi. But Sciarra, for the present, turned as deaf an ear to their proposals as they had at first done to that of the Grand Duke's, and remained where he was—the lord of the Abruzzi.

He was not long, however, in finding that in the death of Piccolomini, who had so materially assisted him, he had sustained a severe loss, and Sciarra's fortunes were still more overcast when Pope Sixtus died and was succeeded by a better or more active Pontiff, Clement VIII. The new Pope shared all the feelings of the Viceroy of Naples, as far as regarded the banditti, whom he determined to extirpate in his States. To this end he dispatched Gianfrancesco Aldobrandini against them, with a permanent commission.

By a simultaneous movement a large body of the Viceroy's troops entered the Abruzzi. The command of this, with absolute power, was given to Don

Adriano Acquaviva, Count of Conversano, a nobleman of courage and very admirable prudence. The first thing he attempted, and without which little indeed could be done in that wild country of mountains and forests, was to conciliate the affections of the peasantry, who had been so insulted and oppressed by all his stupid predecessors in office, and the soldiery, that they could not but wish well to their enemies, the robbers. The Count, therefore, abstained from quartering his troops in the villages ; he imitated the conduct of Sciarra, and made them pay for whatever they consumed ; he listened to the complaints of the aggrieved, and at last he so gained on the affections and better principles of the peasants, that they conspired with him for the extermination of the very banditti whom they had so often guided and concealed. With them, as guides, the soldiery had now a key to the mysteries and recesses of the mountains and forests.

Thus deprived of the protection of Piccolomini, pressed by Aldobrandini on the one side and by Conversano on the other, Marco Sciarra was fain to reflect on the tender made to him by the Venetian Senators, and finally to accept the rank and service they offered him. They must still have thought him and those he could bring with him well worth having, for they dispatched two galleys of the Republic for their conveyance. In these ships Marco Sciarra embarked with sixty of his bravest and most attached followers, and, turning his back on his native mountains, sailed up the Adriatic to Venice.

As soon as the Count of Conversano was informed of the robber-chief's departure, he blessed his stars that the kingdom was quit of so dangerous a subject, and, thinking now his business was over, returned to Naples, where the Viceroy received him in triumph.

But the expatriating bandit left a brother behind

him in the mountains of the Abruzzi; and Luca Sciarra in due time gathered together the scattered bands, and commenced operations anew with considerable vigour. Meanwhile Marco and his men, who in their quality of subsidiaries served the Venetian Republic very much to its satisfaction, corresponded with their former comrades at home. Marco's glory could not be forgotten! The soul of their body was at Venice—every thing of importance was fomented by him, and he frequently employed his “leaves of absence” in visiting them, and leading them, as of yore, in the more hazardous of their enterprises.

He had now been heard of so long—his deeds had been so desperate but successful, he had escaped so many dangers, that people concluded he must bear “a charmed life.” His long impunity might almost have made him think so himself, when, landing one day in the marches of Ancona, between the mountains of the Abruzzi and that town, where the Pope's Commissary Aldobrandini still remained, he was met by a certain Battimello, to whom, as to an old follower, his heart warmed;—with open arms he rushed to embrace him, and received a traitor's dagger in that heart.

Battimello had sold himself to Aldobrandini, and received for himself, and thirteen of his friends, a free pardon from the Papal Government for his treachery.

For some years after the death of Marco Sciarra, there was a pause in his profession, whose spirit had expired with him. Other times brought other robbers, but his fame has scarcely ever been equalled—never surpassed.

THE BRIGANDS OF CALABRIA.

THE French, with the vigour and unscrupulousness of a Military Government, might, at a later period, and indeed did, materially put down brigandism in Italy; but one of the fruits of their first invasion was a temporary state of society particularly well adapted to the renewal and increase of those associations.

The Republican armies spread themselves over the Piedmontese and Milanese territories, preaching liberty and equality. The enviable equality in the eyes of the poor and ignorant orders of the Italians was that of property; and when they saw their instructors, the French, frequently confounding the *meum* and *tuum* in public matters, they were too apt to follow their example in private ones. Many of these men, moreover, were shamefully used by the invaders, and driven to desperation. Many, perhaps, in the north of Italy as in the south, detested the French and the French system generally. Among the northern Italians there was, indeed, considerable national spirit, and, in the absence of energy in their own Government, certain daring individuals thought, by throwing themselves into the mountains and deep valleys, they might check the invaders by a species of Guerilla warfare; and proving too weak for such an operation, they were still strong enough to turn brigands, and these supported themselves for a while on the plunder of the foreigners, and of such as had meanly submitted to their sway, forgetful of their religion and their lawful sovereign. Several trials at the period prove that men thus found an excuse for, or justified their offences. Such a defence could hardly obtain in any court of justice, but among the

simple mountaineers and peasantry the plea seemed reasonable and almost honourable. It is worth while to remark, in passing, that the French, with their new Republican doctrines in Italy, were generally well received by the superior class of burgesses, lawyers, physicians, &c. of the great cities, and even by many of the nobility, whose importance and rights their system was to annihilate; but from the mass of the populace, properly so called, even of the great towns, and from the peasantry, the oppressed classes, according to their creed, whose condition they were to improve, and whom they were to admit to the *droits de l'homme*, they never found favour. The French, I am aware, attributed this to their brutal ignorance and superstition; but they themselves showed a woful ignorance of human nature when they expected the poor Italians would take an interest in what they did not understand, and at once throw off all the feelings and prejudices of ages, and renounce their nationality at the apparition of a novel and unsightly idol—the red cap of Liberty.

To the men whose hatred of a foreign invader and whose political feelings led them at this time to brigandism, must of course be added, what was probably a still more numerous class,—those men naturally bad, who availed themselves of the disordered state of the country and other things incidental to war, and those whom that war deprived of their habitual means of existence.

At a later period the introduction of the tyrannical conscription was another source of lawless adventure. Desperate deserters not unfrequently took to the mountains, and preferred living by robbing in their own country, to following the French eagle to rob in Germany, Spain, or Russia. These bands had generally but a short duration, and though I have heard of the exploits of their leaders on the spot, in the pass

of the Bocchetta behind Genoa, about Gavi, in the mountains of the Riviere, and other points of the Apennines, I retain nothing very peculiar or striking, except the Evan Dhu-like remark of one of them when placed before the French military tribunal at Turin. He had been addressed in what he considered an insulting tone; he raised his arm, made a step forward with his fettered leg, and darting a glance of fire on the officers he said, "*Per Dio! se fosse nelle mie montagne non parlaste così!*" "By Heavens! if I were in my mountains again, you would not speak to me in this manner!" But it was in the south of Italy, where men have always been more fiery and lawless; it was in the Abruzzi, and still more particularly in Calabria, that "land of the mountain and the"—brigand, where the French did what Pompey boasted he could do by a stamp of his foot—raise whole legions.

These regenerating conquerors had penetrated as far as Naples; the army had run away, the king and court had run away, only the poor despised lazzaroni of the capital had made anything like a bold resistance to the entrance of the invaders into the capital, and a puppet, by some degrees more ridiculous than the national Ponchinello, had been got up under the title of "La Repubblica Partenopea." King Ferdinand, however, for that time had not resigned himself to a long sojourn in Sicily. He knew the antipathy of the populace of his dominions to the French, which was much more vehement than what existed in the north of the Peninsula; he was aware also, that though his soldiers had proved cowards, there were plentiful elements of bravery and daring, especially among the mountaineers of Calabria and the Abruzzi, which the breath of fanaticism could kindle to a flame; and he sent over to them, not a general but a priest—the celebrated Cardinal Ruffo, who effected

one of the most extraordinary counter-revolutions of modern times.

No sooner had the Cardinal raised the Bourbon banner at the extremity of the Calabrias, than at the call of legitimacy and holy faith, (Ferdinando e la Santa Fede!) thousands flocked to it, and swore to purge the kingdom of Frenchmen and Jacobins, and restore their lawful sovereign. Among these multitudes were some who were already nothing more nor less than brigands; but they had arms in their hands, were daring, active, and better acquainted with the country than any other class, and these were not times for the Cardinal to be very particular in the choice of his instruments. He enrolled them, and marched forward, gradually swelling his bands with tributary streams, that dropped in from the mountains. Some of these were pure enough, and only propelled by a simple spirit of loyalty; but it is too notorious to be denied, that many of these Calabrians were banditti, or now acted as such, favoured by the state of things, and afterwards became robbers *en règle*. The march of this most irregular army, headed by a priest—a prince of the holy empire—was signalised by blood and plunder. Wherever a town had shown any attachment or subserviency to the Republicans, the Santafedisti made it run with blood, and murder and plunder were not always confined to such sinful or obnoxious places. Soon their shouts of “Viva la Santa Fede!” (Long live the Holy Faith!) were heard before the Neapolitan capital, where it was echoed by the lazzaroni, and the rest of the populace, who rushed out with enthusiasm, that amounted to madness, to join the Cardinal’s standard. The French retreated, and shut themselves up in the castle of Sant’ Elmo, where they soon capitulated; but the city became one scene of plunder, destruction, and butchery. Calabrians and lazzaroni were absolute masters of it

for many days. They did not leave a palace or a house, whose owners were suspected of jacobinism or republicanism, (they knew no distinction between these two,) unplundered. Unhappy the man in those days, that did not wear a pig-tail ! for a tail was their political criterion. King Ferdinand wore a tail, all the Santa-fedisti wore tails ; but the French did not, and all the Neapolitans, who had cut off theirs, were unredeemable revolutionists, who deserved to have their heads cut off. The madness and ferocity of their hate, in some instances, went to such horrid extremes, that I have been informed on good authority, they were seen to tear out their victims' hearts, and eat them in the public square, before the Royal palace. All this wholesale robbery and murder was performed to the tune of " Viva la Santa Fede !"

" It was curious," said an old Neapolitan nobleman to me, in describing these events, " to see the evil force of example. Men of the lower orders, who had been all their lives quiet honest fellows, who would not have given a blow, nor robbed any one of a *grano*, now joined the general brigandage, as if they had been all their lives robbers by profession !"

These scenes of horror were chequered, as they always will be, where a semi-barbarous horde and a mob are the actors, by much that was ridiculous and laughable, if the spectators had had any heart for laughing *à la Don Juan*.

A party of the plunderers and Jacobin-hunters one day placed a cannon before the strong and obstinately closed gate of the palace of the Prince d'——, to force it open. Through their ignorance and confusion, they so fired it off, that they did not burst the gates, but swept down several of their companions, whose Calabrian and lazzaroni blood besmeared the walls of the building, whilst the recoil of the gun killed or maimed several others.

On another occasion they seized a gentleman who was on the wrong side of politics, as far as the tail went, but who had prudently provided himself with a false pig-tail. When the *caudal* visit was paid, and the *capillary* appendage found in its proper place, they were going to let him pass on as a faithful subject of his Majesty King Ferdinand, but a prying dog of a Calabrian caught hold of the tail, and it came away in his hand! Here then was a decided *Giacobbo*, who merited death; but whether it was that they had some respect for a man who affected a virtue though he had it not, or whether they were in a funny humour, they determined by acclamation that he should be let off, after eating his tail. Prayers and remonstrances were vain; they thrust the pig-tail in his mouth, and with shouts of laughter were trying to force it down his throat, as Fluellin made Pistol swallow the leek, when a more orderly body of counter-revolutionists came up, and saved him from a curious process of choking.

As they were dragging along another of their prisoners, the worthy old Cavalier di —, a man who ate his macaroni all his life without one revolutionary or political inspiration ever interfering with his digestion, they kicked and cuffed him in the most hearty manner, bawling at him as he went along, *Giacobbo! Giacobbo!* “*Non sono Giacobbo, ma Giobbe, Giobbe, sono Giobbe!*”* said the old man, turning round his patient, suffering countenance upon the mob, who, at length touched by his tranquil, venerable appearance, and by his repeating that he was a Job, to bear their treatment as he did, liberated him. He lived many years to tell this story, and this piece of allusive alliteration.

It was almost as unfortunate to be convicted of speaking French, as to have no pig-tail. A dear

* *Giacobbo* was the Neapolitan for Jacobin. *Giobbe* is good Italian for Job.

friend of mine, who commenced an extensive experience of the blessings of revolutions and foreign invasions at an early age, was well nigh paying dear for this accomplishment. He was accustomed to speak French with his father, a native of Switzerland, whose maternal language it was, and this principally led to a visit from the Calabrians, who plundered the house, and carried father, mother, and son, before Pane di Grana, one of the chiefs of the counter-revolutionists, and a *ci-devant* brigand.

My friend has introduced this incident in a work of fiction, that contains much that is true, and decidedly the best account of the troublous times of which I am speaking, with an admirably drawn character of Cardinal Ruffo. It is thus he describes Pane di Grana, and the curious tribunal of that robber chief.

“Under the arched vestibule of the convent of Monte Santo, the massive gates of which were thrown wide open, sat Pane di Grana, a Calabrian chief of some consequence. This man, it was said, had been a *bandito* for several years, and had infested the high roads of Calabria, where he had, of course, shared a proportion of the misdemeanors of people in his condition. He had plundered, and probably shot the unfortunate travellers, whenever he met with resistance, but only, as *he* considered, in fair action; for the rest, he was not sanguinary nor cruel. He was a middle-aged man, rather short, strongly and squarely built, inclined to corpulency, of a dark complexion, and with a plain, countryman-like countenance, the expression of which had nothing repulsive. On the present occasion he was dressed in a short green jacket of velveteen, a red sash, and leathern belt, holding a dagger and a pair of large pistols; he wore high riding-boots, and a low, slouched hat, with a red cockade on one side, and a tin image of the Virgin in front, stuck in the hatband. He was seated on a

long wooden bench, resting his back against the smoky walls of the building; some firelocks, in better order than those the insurgents generally carried, were piled against the wall opposite, and a tattered, soiled white flag, was furled near them. These were the head-quarters and tribunal of the chief. His men were quartered in the convent, refectory, and dormitory. A few straggling monks, of the Carmelite order, scared away first by the French unbelievers, and little better treated now by the defenders of the faith, had taken refuge in some obscure recess of the vast building, and left the rest at the disposal of the champions of king and church, who sometimes plundered both the one and the other—by mistake.*

Another celebrated insurgent chief at the time, half-brigand, half-royalist, was the priest or Abbé Proni, whose rifle levelled many a fugitive French republican. My friend had also the fortune, or *misfortune* of an interview with him, which he thus pleasantly describes in a letter to me.

“In November 1799, after the horrors of the revolution and counter-revolution of Naples had somewhat subsided, I left that city with my father on our way to Rome and Tuscany. Boy as I was, the scenes of pillage, violence, and devastation, which I had witnessed, had made a deep impression on my mind, and I felt relieved as we left behind us the last suburbs of that blood-stained capital. But we had not yet done with the insurgents and their feats. We arrived early in the evening at Mola di Gaeta, and were ushered into the large dining-room of the locanda, the windows of which look on the beautiful gulf, and the distant islands of Ponza and Ventotene. We found only one person in the room seated at table. He was a stout,

* Anselmo: a Tale of Italy. By A. Vieusseux, Author of “Italy and The Italians,” &c. &c. London: Charles Knight, MDCCCXXV.

square-built man, with a sun-burnt countenance, looking something between a country priest and a farmer. He had apparently just eaten his dinner, and was engaged with his dessert, which consisted of a small dish of *pignoli* (the pine almond) and a flask of wine, and I was much struck with the nicety with which he picked, one after the other, the diminutive kernels between his big, broad, and not very clean thumb and index. I had an unpleasant recollection of the large sprawling hands of the Calabrians, who had a few months before invaded our quiet dwelling at Naples, destroyed or carried away our moveables, and taken us before their chief to be tried for our lives. The association of my ideas was unfavourable to the dark stranger, and I was glad to see him, after both his plate and his flask were empty, rise and leave the room without saying a word, though not without having cast upon us several scrutinizing glances. But our passports were regular, and we had duly delivered them to the landlord. After the stranger was gone, my father asked the waiter who that *galantuomo* was? The man looked first to the door to see that he was fairly gone, and then in a sort of whisper he said, *l'Abate Proni*. Now this was the name of a celebrated chief of the insurrection in the Abruzzi, who, after hunting the French and their partisans out of his mountains, had effected his junction with the Army of the Faith under Cardinal Ruffo, and contributed to the re-conquest of Naples. Not another word was said; we had in the same house a formidable neighbour, a man whose name had struck terror, and spread destruction, from the shores of the Adriatic to those of the Mediterranean. But he was now in the regular service of King Ferdinand, and bore the royal commission as colonel. We slept quietly at the inn, and on starting early next morning, my father understood that Proni had left in the night on some

expedition connected with his Majesty's service! Three-and-thirty years have since elapsed, and Proni has long been dead; yet I have still before my mind's eye the dreaded insurgent chief seated at table, quietly picking his *pignoli* in the dining-room of Mola di Gaeta.

“ We arrived early next day at the villanous-looking town of Itri, perched on the mountain of St. Andrea. I almost wish Lady Morgan, who felt so horrified at the appearance of the place, and thought she saw a *bandito* lurking within the threshold of every house, could, without suffering any bodily harm, have seen it as we did then. It was, or rather had just been, the head-quarters of Fra Diavolo and his band, many of whom still remained behind. The narrow, steep, roughly-paved street was strewn with wrecks of carriages, chaises, caleches, and other vehicles, once belonging to the unfortunate French commissaries and other agents, and their Neapolitan partisans, who had been waylaid and murdered at this very place, after the retreat of the French army. Bodies of carriages, wheels, axletrees, &c. were heaped up against the corners of the ruinous-looking houses. We were told that about seventy carriages had been thus served. What had become of the travellers in them we did not inquire—it was easy to guess. In the midst of this delectable scene we remained for three hours, because some part of our own carriage having broken in the ascent of that abominable mountain, we were obliged to have recourse to the Itri blacksmith, who was not very expeditious or skilful. The fear of being benighted before we reached Terracina, in a land swarming with banditti or insurgents, for these were synonymous words in the heyday of their triumph, kept my father in continual anxiety, which, however, he thought prudent to dissemble. I remember the locanda of Itri, and its bare,

smoky walls, desolate hearth, and worm-eaten table and chairs. At last the carriage was got ready *come Dio volle*, and we started again down the hill in perpetual fear of breaking down. We passed the custom-house of Fondi, where we saw for the first time on the road something resembling regular soldiers; and late in the evening reached Terracina, glad to have escaped from a land of cut-throats, and reached the comparatively pacific dominions of the Holy See. There was then no talk of banditti in the Roman States; they had all gone over the border to help their brethren of Naples."

The restoration of Ferdinand, which had been thus curiously effected, did not last long. In 1806, the French again took the road to Naples, and the Bourbon and his court again fled to Sicily. The Government now established, so far from being a Republic, as on the former occasion, was a Monarchy more absolute than that of old Ferdinand; for the French had submitted to the military despotism of Bonaparte, and Napoleon had willed that his brother Joseph should be king of Naples. The usurped monarchy, however, prospered better than the Republic; it was better suited to the Neapolitans; it was sustained by an excellent French army, and by the *now* continental supremacy of Napoleon. The mass of the nation was, however, disaffected; many men of different classes of society, from the Marchese Palmieri to the apothecary who blew up the house of the French minister of police, the execrable Saliceti; from the dismissed employés of the late Government to the poor fanatics of Bourbonism and Santa-Fede-ism the lazzaroni, remained in the capital disposed to plot, and ever ready to communicate with their friends in Sicily, and the emissaries the restless Queen Caroline was continually dispatching to them. Calabria was as loyal and as lawless as ever. King Ferdinand pro-

posed to Cardinal Ruffo that he should throw himself a second time in those provinces, and repeat the experiment of counter-revolution, in which, six years before, he had been so successful. But the Cardinal had seen the horrors of civil war; the difficulty, the impossibility of restraining within proper limits the violent passions he had so well known how to excite: he excused himself to his Majesty, saying, "That this was a game only to be played once in the course of one's life!" All entreaties were vain; the Cardinal would not a second time face the earthly Pandemonium. The Queen, however, and her partisans tried to do, what he had done, without him. But the country was occupied by formidable forces whom the Calabrians had not the discipline or other military means to meet in the field; the great towns and the wealthy proprietors pretty generally adhered, some out of affection, but more through fear, to the new system; a middling class was indifferent as to whether King Ferdinand or King Joseph pocketed the taxes they were obliged to pay; and few indeed remained to treat with, when some months had passed, save the populace who hated the French, and the bandits who had gained such laurels under Cardinal Ruffo. But with these the queen did treat, and that incessantly, sending them commissions and uniforms, and occasionally arms and small supplies of money. These robbers corresponded with others in the different mountainous districts of the Principato, Basilicata, and the Abruzzi. Of the latter some were driven by the French from their haunts, and obliged to fly across the mountains and wilds of Calabria, where they joined their correspondents, and some were suppressed, sent to the galleys, or executed.

The last fate befel no one so notorious as Fra Diavolo, whose name and fame, as I have mentioned, are still fresh and vigorous among the Neapolitans.

This man, after long setting both civil and military authorities at defiance ; after having long impressed the people with a notion that he was endowed with ubiquity, for he seemed to be here and there and everywhere, almost at the same moment ; after several bold encounters, and hair-breadth 'scapes innumerable ; was at length foully betrayed by some of his own friends and accomplices, and marched off in the midst of a troop of French gendarmes to Naples. Neither the harsh treatment, the terrible fatigue he was made to undergo on his march by the soldiers, who were all mounted, nor the prospect of certain death, could break this man's spirit. He taunted them with the recollection of the numerous occasions on which he had fooled them, and told them they never would have caught him but by treachery.

As he approached the capital, thousands flocked out to see him. Loaded with chains, worn down with fatigue as he was, many turned pale and trembled at the sight of Fra Diavolo. The luxurious King Joseph, who was taking his pleasure at Portici, was also curious to see the man who, for many months, had filled his kingdom with his renown, and very unfeelingly, as it seems to me, ordered that he should be brought out to him. Fra Diavolo had walked many miles in his road to death, but without any of that regard we are accustomed to pay to criminals in such circumstances, and was at once made to turn back on the road to Portici. When he arrived there, he was promenaded under a balcony of the Royal palace, whence Joseph satisfied his curiosity, and then ordered him to prison and execution.

But where one robber fell into the hands of the French, fifty Frenchmen fell by the knife or the ambushed shot of the banditti. The army of occupation could maintain themselves in the large towns, and traverse certain open parts of the Calabrias, but

only as an army—a small detachment was almost sure to be destroyed. A staff officer of the French army informed me that on one occasion, being tired of moving along with the infantry and artillery, and seeing a free country, as he thought, between him and the town to which he was going, he set off alone at a canter. He had not gone half a mile, when a bullet whizzed past his head. His canter was converted into a hand gallop; but though he had only about *three* miles now to perform, as many shots were fired at him in the interval, without his ever being able to see from whom they proceeded.

To the desperate men whom the Queen had not hesitated to employ as the asserters of her royal cause, and justice, and legitimacy, were soon added hosts of others whom the oppression and insolence of the French, or the hope of another speedy and successful counter-revolution, induced to take up arms and throw themselves *en campagne*. The French called them all by one name, whether political partisans or professional robbers; all were brigands, and treated in the same summary manner when caught. It is true, that at length the two classes were almost confounded in one, and that unfortunate politicians had no resources left them save those of brigandage; but many a fiery Calabrian merited not the name at the commencement of the struggle, and at no time indeed must the wholesale executions of the French be taken *au pied de la lettre* as including only banditti. On their side the Calabrians were accustomed to hold the French as robbers, and not entirely without reason.

“*I ladri siete voi,*” said a Calabrian prisoner to the military tribunal of Monteleone. “The robbers are yourselves! What business have you here, and with us? I carried my rifle and my knife for King

Ferdinand, whom may God restore ! but *I* am no robber !”

The English, who now preserved Sicily from the grasp of the French, meditated a descent on the coast of Calabria. This intelligence was conveyed to the bands in that country, whose confidence and daring it immensely augmented ; and when, in an astonishingly short time after, General Stuart landed and gained the brilliant victory of Maida, the Calabrians looked to nothing less than the expulsion of the French from the whole kingdom. Many who had remained quiet, declared themselves at this period ; and a very available guerilla warfare, to be carried on by thousands of hardy Calabrians, might have acted in concert with a strong invading army from Sicily. But owing to the circumstances of the times, the victory of Maida was rather brilliant than useful ; the English had not force sufficient to follow it up, and after humbling the overweening vanity of the French, they returned to Sicily. The troops of Napoleon, column after column, now poured into Calabria, where the fate of the Bourbonists and the banditti seemed to be decided. But there were mountains and secret dells, forests and impenetrable morasses, to offer a retreat to desperation, while the outlaws had in themselves the resources of local knowledge, activity, and of a cunning altogether wonderful ; and many thousands of the foreign troops had to leave their bones to bleach in the Calabrias before the satellite sovereignty of Napoleon could make a dubious boast of subjugation. Indeed more men fell in what they called “ *ces guerres de brigands,*” than in campaigns with which the French decided the destinies of whole kingdoms. We may sigh for the fate of many a brave and amiable victim, for many a youthful conscript dragged from his home, perhaps in a country foreign to France, to

die in Calabria by the bandit's knife; but these men made part of a system for which we can have little sympathy as a whole. At the same time the evils that befell the peaceful population were heart-rending. Now the French shot them as being suspected of leaguings with the outlaws, and now the outlaws slaughtered them under a doubt that they informed against them to the French; whilst in many instances, the mere fact of their having admitted the foreigners, too strong to be resisted, into their houses, and given them those refreshments they durst not withhold, was enough to consign them to the destruction of vengeance.

When travelling through the country ten years after the melancholy events, I was shown a deserted farmhouse in the plain of Sant' Eufemia. It stood in an isolated spot. "You see that masseria?" said my guide; "it was occupied in the time of the French by an honest and industrious *colono*, who had a wife, five children, and his old mother living with him. He had some dealings with the French commandant of the town, and this excited the rage of the brigands who were swarming in the neighbourhood. One night these villains broke into the house; the cries and shrieks of its inmates were so dreadful, that they were heard by the French sentries as far off as the town. A strong guard marched thence, and when they reached the masseria, they found the *colono*, his wife, his old mother, and little children, not only dead, but hacked to pieces. There were no traces of the brigands, but it was well known, and *why*, they had done it. They had carried off all the wine and provisions from the house, as well as a mare from the stable."

I believe the Calabrians are not afraid of ghosts, yet the scene of these atrocities had never since been inhabited. One half of the door and portions of the

window shutters still remained; the former, as we passed, was flapping to and fro with the breeze of a windy evening.

In another part of the country my guide showed me a "roofless cot decayed and rent," and blackened with smoke. To this, according to his authority, some French soldiers had tracked a brigand, or one whom they considered as such; it was his paternal home, where his father, mother, and a brother lived, and who, instead of turning him out to the soldiers, or to certain death, closed their door, and prepared to defend him as best they could. Without any consideration for the innocence of the rest of the family, some of the soldiers crept to the back of the dwelling and set fire to it. But even when they felt the flames gaining upon them, the Calabrians would not give themselves or their relative up to the tender mercies of the troops—they stayed where they were, and were all burned to death.

The cruelties exercised on both sides sharpened their mutual hatred and revenge, until they waged war on each other with infinitely more than the ferocity of wild beasts.

The relations of the horrors I heard when travelling through the country, did more than confirm the accounts which have been given by Mr. Elmhirst, an officer of the British Navy, who was an eye-witness of much that he describes.*

"In the centre of the town of Monteleone," says that gentleman, "there is a prison set apart for brigands of the most daring and unequivocal description; and at this time it is full of these unfortunate men. Fresh captives are continually brought in; but

* Occurrences during a six months' residence in the province of Calabria Ulteriore, in the years 1809, 1810, &c. by Lieutenant P. J. Elmhirst, R. N.

the daily executions prevent the place from being too much crowded. They seldom experience the least mercy, but are condemned with merely the shadow of a trial; it is, in reality, martial law by which these men are sentenced; and the executions are conducted solely by the military. At the distance of a mile east of the town is a gallows, which is never without two or more suspended from it. It is usual to execute them early in the morning, and they are left on the gallows, *in terrorem*, until the following morning, when they are taken down, and thrown, with the whole of their clothes on, into a large pit, dug near the spot: their place is then supplied by others."

Mr. Elmhirst goes on to relate, that from the frequency of these executions, men's minds seemed to become horribly familiarised to them, and that very rarely a few idle spectators were collected on such occasions. The brigands, almost to a man, died courageously, some of them being known to embrace the gallows, as their sole deliverance from insolence and oppression. Without preparation, with no friend to soothe them, with no priest allowed to assist and console them in their last moments, they were generally dragged with unfeeling, indecent hurry, to the Golgotha, amidst the reproaches and insults of the soldiery. They were hung up, without having their shoes or hats taken off, or any covering over their faces; and as they were turned off, they were fired at by their merciless executioners, not to lessen their sufferings, but from mere spite or wantonness. "For none of those I saw," says Mr. Elmhirst, "were shot in a vital part, but had musket-shots through their legs, &c. which would rather protract than diminish their torture." He had the curiosity and nerve to examine the large pit near the spot, into which, day after day, the remains of the brigands were thrown, as though they had been very dogs.

“ This vault was very deep and spacious, yet was it almost full of these hapless victims. On lifting up the cover from its mouth, the spectacle that presented itself was horrible beyond description ; and the stench and heat almost insupportable. A promiscuous heap of human bodies, in different positions, some having their feet upwards, others their legs and arms extended, &c. The adjoining ground, also, was full of graves, which being of a very inconsiderable depth, the bodies had occasionally been disinterred by dogs and other animals, and the surrounding fields were overspread with human bones, and the fragments of garments. For the first two or three years, all the brigands that were taken in the province, were brought to Monteleone, and shot in a valley, near the springs which supply the town with water ; in consequence of which, the inhabitants abstained, for a long time, from using it and went to a rivulet at a considerable distance. They complained of the inconvenience, and as the French themselves participated in it, and were likewise desirous that the fate of their victims should be more ignominious, they erected the gallows, and the bones at the former place of execution were collected and burned.”

There was a second prison in Monteleone, where six British seamen, who had been taken prisoners with Mr. Elmhirst, were confined for some time. That gentleman, who visited it every day, on account of the poor sailors, describes it as being the most filthy and horrible of gaols ; yet, here the French had confined, with women and children of the peasantry, who had been suspected of favouring and carrying supplies to the brigands, many individuals of respectable situations in society, who were too much attached to their allegiance, to serve the oppressors of their country.

Our countrymen, who had been shipwrecked, and

had thrown themselves on the coast of Calabria, in a country occupied by the enemy of Great Britain, only to escape death, were well nigh owing their release, during the first days of their captivity, to the outlaws. They were detained in the little sea-port of Bianco, when the appearance of four Sicilian gun-boats threw the whole neighbourhood into alarm, for it was understood that they came from Queen Caroline, with provisions and ammunition for the bands outlawed by the French, that existed in great force in the difficult and lofty mountains, a little to the north of Bianco, which place had lately suffered severely from an attack. It was now expected that the Sicilian boats, which had each twenty or thirty soldiers on board, would land their men under cover of their guns, and that by signals, the mountaineers would descend and form a junction with them on their landing; in which case Bianco could have offered no available resistance. "In this emergency," says Mr. Elmhirst, "we were far from being a desirable charge: as the inhabitants knew the brigands were acquainted with our being in confinement, as well as with the circumstances of our detention, which would be an additional incitement to them to make the attack, for, could they effect our rescue, the achievement would not only be creditable, but advantageous to them. An incident occurred on the following day which convinced me they had projected the attempt. At ten in the forenoon, a man of respectable appearance rode up in a great hurry to our residence; and, unmindful of our being in quarantine, passed the sentinels, (who were Neapolitans,) came within the prescribed bounds, dismounted immediately, and addressing himself to me, asked several questions about the number of our guards, &c. The arrival of the intendant of Bianco, who owned the vineyard where

we were confined, and whose house stood on the opposite hill, about three quarters of a mile off, put an end to his inquiries. The intendant presently dismissed our visitor, and informed us that he was one who lived in the neighbourhood of the brigands, had two brothers attached to them, one of whom was in Sicily, the other in the mountains, and was himself of doubtful character. The extraordinary conduct and appearance of this man fully convinced me that he was an emissary of the mountaineers, sent with the view of ascertaining our situation, and to devise the best plan of liberating us, and conducting us to their retreat. In the evening our guard was doubled; in the night patrols were continually going their rounds, and the sentinels were on the alert, and evidently in great alarm. One of them, a youth, told me, that he was in principle a brigand, or royalist, (for the terms were now synonymous,) and would readily embrace the first opportunity that presented itself of declaring for his original and rightful sovereign."

The very next morning, notwithstanding that the term of their quarantine had not expired, Mr. Elm-hirst and the six English seamen were suddenly hurried off, under a numerous escort, to the large town of Girace. On their way they saw a good proof of the intelligence that existed between the men on the mountains, and those from Sicily. A number of the brigands were assembled near a house on the declivity of the hills, and one of the gun-boats was lying-to, on the coast, just opposite to them. The brigands, they were told, were very numerous in the vicinity of the road. "No place, however, near a town was safe from them; as they concealed themselves among the rocks and bushes by day, and from those retreats sprang unawares on the heedless and defenceless passenger; so that it was usual for a person, even if he

had to go but half a mile from his residence, to be well armed, and have one or two armed companions. The capuchins alone escaped their violence."

From Girace, our honest tars were soon marched through this land of brigandism, across the rugged Apennines, to Casal Nuovo. At this town, Mr. Elmhirst saw evidences of the French oppression, which so directly tended to swell the number of the disaffected, and the bands of outlaws. The contributions, civil and military, were levied with the utmost rigour—with the bayonet at the breasts of those who had to pay them. A French officer unblushingly showed him a silver crosier, which he had seized at Girace, from a priest, as an equivalent for some arrears he was unable to obtain. The clergy, from their comparative affluence, their known dislike to the present order of things, and, perhaps, more still from the philosophic intolerance of these conquerors of the new school, were most frequently subjected to extortion. The churches themselves were not spared. "These were mostly stripped of their plate, ornaments, and every thing else of value; and the only consolation left to the priests for their real losses, was a few relics, and frivolous pictures, which their worthlessness, not the veneration of the French for such things, had preserved."

The effect of these proceedings alone, on a people so attached to their priests and their churches, and church finery, as the Calabrians, may easily be conceived.

The French soldiery, moreover, made very free with the women, and no people in the world are more sensitive and jealous than the poor Calabrians on this head. The same licentiousness on the part of the French, and the same feelings on that of the islanders, who very much resemble the Calabrians, had, centuries before, led to the memorable Sicilian Vespers;

and though there was now no such successful massacre *en masse*, many a Frenchman paid with his life for those excesses and irregularities, which, of all things, were most insupportable to the Calabrians.

But there was yet another curse at work, to alienate their minds, and drive them to madness. This was the conscription, or forced impressment for soldiers, which the French introduced wherever they established themselves. Many young men, who were not desperate enough to turn brigands, passed themselves off as priests, or as candidates for the priesthood. For as none of the laity, capable of bearing arms, whatever might be their rank or condition, were exempted from those arbitrary visitations, this was the only expedient left.

“Under the mask of resignation,” says Mr. Elmhirst, “the Calabrians, with spirits naturally haughty, dark, and vindictive, cherished the most inveterate hatred, and meditated the most violent designs; looking forward with a malignant pleasure to the moment which would afford them an opportunity of gratifying their resentment and revenge.”

From Casal Nuovo, the English prisoners were marched still farther up the country, towards Monteleone.

On their way they stopped at Loriana, which town, a few weeks before their arrival, had been attacked and pillaged in the night by the brigands; of whom there were parties in the adjacent mountains, consisting of from fifty to three hundred, all well armed, and some of them, who were probably under the guidance of partisans from Sicily, even disciplined and provided with field-pieces. The baronial palace did not escape plunder. The robbers, however, committed no acts of cruelty on the inhabitants, some of whom, indeed, were more than suspected of being spies of the ban-

ditti, and of having given them notice of the most favourable opportunity for making the incursion.

I have mentioned the importance of a pig-tail at Naples, a few years before. It appears, the Calabrians still retained the same predilection.

“I had scarcely entered my quarters at Loriana,” says Mr. Elmhirst, “when a countryman came in, who, seeing that my hair was cut close, observed in an angry manner to those present, “that I had the appearance of a Frenchman, and, had he met me alone, he should have treated me as one.” The Senza-Capelli, (without hair,) or croppies, as they were termed, were considered by the brigands to be revolutionists, or partisans of the French, and they exercised on them the greatest and most unheard-of barbarities. They frequently scalped, or otherwise maimed them. Sometimes they cut off their ears and fingers, which the unfortunate sufferers were compelled to eat; and on the heads of many who were without queues, they sewed the tails of sheep, by way of furnishing them with such appendages, and in that condition dismissed them. So that every one who regarded his personal safety, took care to preserve an exuberance of hair; the more of it he had, or the longer queue, so much the more he was esteemed loyal, or an enemy to the French, and thereby escaped outrage.”

In the neighbourhood of Monteleone, owing to the more accessible nature of the mountains there, the ravages of the brigands were considerably restrained. But this was, perhaps, still more owing to the circumstance, that one of the chiefs of the banditti had deserted them, and was employed by the French, who had promoted him to the rank of captain, and appointed him, with a company of soldiers, to act against his former followers and comrades. The name of this renegado, who soon afterwards came to a

violent end at the hands of those he had betrayed, was Andrea Orlando. He was, what several of the bandits were not, a man of the meanest extraction, but bold, artful, and enterprising. Acquainted with all their secret retreats and habits, he without compunction hunted his former associates through the mountains with the most lamentable success. "All that could not be taken prisoners were shot, and in that event their heads were cut off, and brought into the town, fixed on forked sticks, where they were exhibited in the most frequented parts, the bloody trophies of barbarity and perfidy."

As Mr. Elmhirst was one morning at the prison where the English seamen were detained, "an elderly man, who supported a numerous family on the profits of a little shop and wine-house, and who was remarkable for his industry and honesty, was brought in a prisoner, and half dead. He had been to a village at the foot of the mountains to purchase wine, and was returning home with two small casks on an ass, when he was met soon after day-light by a party of Andrea Orlando's men, who suspecting him to be connected with the brigands, immediately conveyed him to the gallows, and were preparing to hang him, when he was fortunately recognised by a person who happened to be present, and reluctantly spared from death. After a day's imprisonment he was examined and liberated. This trifling circumstance proves the wretched state of this country. It was by a mere accident this innocent man was rescued from death; and without doubt, many suffered in that manner who were equally guiltless."

We must follow this interesting authority yet a little farther, as Mr. Elmhirst saw more of the state of brigandage in Calabria, when at its height, than any other Englishman whose travels I am acquainted with.

This officer, after several months' captivity, was liberated and took his route through Calabria from Monteleone, to reach the English head quarters at Messina. He again travelled with a strong escort. Just before he left Monteleone, "A brigand chief, famed for his courage and dreaded for his cruelty, but extremely beloved by his band, was made prisoner at no great distance from Maida, and conducted to a neighbouring castle. His followers were determined to effect his deliverance or revenge his death; and a short time after, they boldly attacked a village, at which a French colonel and his family, attended by a small escort, had taken up their quarters for the night. With a trifling loss the robbers succeeded in carrying off the whole to their retreats in the mountains; and immediately sent notice of the affair to the commander-in-chief, accompanied with a declaration, that if any violence were offered to their captive leader, they should instantly retaliate it on the colonel and the soldiers. In consequence of which an exchange was effected, as creditable and advantageous to the brigands as it was mortifying to the French, who had long wished for the destruction of their prisoner.

On his journey at Seminari, Mr. Elmhirst found that the town and neighbourhood, though protected by several companies of soldiers, were kept in a continual state of alarm by two parties of brigands. They were commanded by Ronca and Oezzarro, two chiefs celebrated for their talents, courage, and daring enterprise. The former was said to be supported by Queen Caroline, from whom he received supplies of ammunition and clothing; and he frequently passed over to Messina, in spite of the vigilance of the French, who had offered a large reward for his head. A little farther on, at the pass of Salano, a young Frenchman (a son-in-law of General Partheneau) in command there, informed Mr. Elmhirst that a few

days before he received a formal message from this same chief Ronca, threatening him with an attack on the village—that robber's native place. The French had good stone barracks; they kept to their arms all night and reposed by day, and Ronca had not yet kept his threat or his promise. Ronca's breaking his word was, however, not so bad, as the manner in which his message was sent to the officer. His band met a poor peasant on the mountains, and having cut him in several places with a knife, and tied his hands behind him, they made him the bearer of Ronca's letter. The poor fellow had arrived at the French post covered with blood.

Mr. Elmhirst was not to be freed from the horrors of brigandism and atrocious warfare as long as he remained in that country; for at the village of Campo, at the very extremity of Calabria, within three miles of the Straits of Messina, and only seven miles from Sicily, whither he was going, he saw a French lieutenant return with the bleeding head of a robber-chief, called "Il Rosso," from the redness of his hair—a man of audacious courage and enterprise, who had long defied all the efforts of the French government to destroy or take him. But at last he was betrayed by some of the peasantry who occupied some lone houses at the foot of the mountains where the robber used occasionally to resort. It was in one of these houses he was surprised by night. The soldiers who surrounded it, summoned him to surrender. Il Rosso knew too well what would be his fate, and resolved, though he might not be able to effect his escape, to sell his life dearly. From the window of the lone house he shot one of the soldiers dead, he then rushed out, wounded two others, and had some prospect of distancing the Frenchmen by his speed in running, when a bullet from the musket of a serjeant of the party overtook him, and brought

him to the ground. He was not, however, dead. When the soldiers came up, he begged they would put him out of his misery. They did so with their bayonets, and then cut off his head, which they carried to quarters as a trophy.

FRANCATRIPA.

FROM the details, concerning the Calabrian banditti, of our countryman, who was only accidentally a passive eye-witness, or brought near the scenes of their exploits, I must beg the reader's attention to details still more interesting, to adventures wilder and more extensive, which I have gathered from a French source—*i. e.* from "Lettres sur les Calabres, par un Officier Français."* The author of this valuable little volume was no less than three years in the country he describes. He had not been there three days, before he found the whole of a French soldier's business there to be a chase after robbers; and, indeed, with a few short intervals of repose, the whole of the three years was spent in hunting brigands.

The first brigand-chief he came in contact with near Rogliano, about five leagues from Cosenza, was Francatripa—a man eminent in his way and the terror of the whole country. When closely pressed, this robber was accustomed to retire for a while to a great distance from the scene of his murderous depredations; but as soon as pursuit was over, he suddenly re-appeared and again carried desolation through the province. By placing himself upon the heights that commanded the usual lines of communication, he

* This excellent work has been lately published in London, under the title of "Calabria during a Military Residence of Three Years."

constantly harassed the French couriers, in order to get possession of their despatches, which he sent off to Sicily. His presence kept the troops in a state of perpetual exertion, the more painful, because it was generally attended with no advantageous results.

A company of French voltigeurs, of the twenty-ninth regiment of the line, had to cross the high mountains of the Sylva to proceed from Catanzaro to Cosenza. This company lost its way, and in an evil spot, for it was near the village called Gli Parenti, a favourite haunt of the brigands, who shared their plunder with its inhabitants; and Francatripa himself was there. Fearing to engage the French openly, the atrocious mountaineer had recourse to an odious stratagem. Meeting the company before it entered the village, he represented himself as the commander of the militia, and said he came on the part of the commune or village to offer refreshments to the troops. The officers, ignorant of the country, accepted the invitation without distrust, and suffered themselves to be conducted by him to a large mansion, where confiding in the feigned cordiality of their perfidious hosts, they were improvident enough to cause the arms of the troops to be piled on the ground, in front of the door. To inspire the soldiers with a still greater sense of security, Francatripa and his villanous associates pressed them to take with them refreshments for the march; and just at the moment they were preparing to resign themselves to repose, a pistol-shot fired from a window was the signal for a general massacre. The three officers, seated together in the saloon, were instantly despatched. A shower of balls from the adjacent houses, and from every approach to the spot, left no point of retreat open to those unfortunate soldiers, of whom not more than seven succeeded in making their escape.

The French, never backward in avenging atrocity

with atrocity, immediately sent off a strong detachment, with orders to burn the village of Gli Parenti to the ground, and to put every soul found within it to the sword. They found, however, nothing but empty houses, which became a prey to the flames, the reflexion of which, far spreading across the mountains where its inhabitants had taken refuge, suggested new feelings of maddening hate and revenge on the part of the Calabrians.

Not long after, the author of the Letters was informed that the scouts of Francatripa had made their appearance in the neighbourhood of his quarters at Rogliano, and, at night, that the captain himself and all his *commitiva*, or band, had lodged themselves among the ruins of their native village, Gli Parenti.

“The French commandant instantly determined to take the brigands by surprise, and we set off, about eight o'clock at night, with a detachment of a hundred and twenty men, and two confidential guides. Gli Parenti, situated four leagues from Rogliano, is separated from the latter place by a deep ravine, through which flows a torrent that is always much swollen at this season of the year. (It was on the 28th December.) To avoid passing near the village, where information of our approach might be given, it was necessary to take a great round, and occupy a certain part of a forest, through which the brigands might probably endeavour to escape. This movement was seconded by a company of the battalion, which had received orders to take up a position by six o'clock in the morning within a short distance of Gli Parenti, and guard all the outlets on that side. The dawn of day was the moment fixed upon for making a sudden and unexpected attack, from which a successful result was confidently anticipated. A cold, but very bright night favoured the march of the detachment, which followed a beaten track in the middle of a wood, but

on quitting it, to approach the ravine, we experienced considerable difficulty in passing through some very thick underwood, where every object was immersed in darkness. The greatest obstacles still awaited us in descending a mountain, from which our course was to be tracked over a region covered with snow to the depth of several feet. This dangerous descent, however, and the crossing of the torrent, were effected without any accident; and at five o'clock in the morning we arrived at our post, pierced with cold, and waiting in silence the moment when we were to advance upon the village. Before daylight we came to a hill, at the foot of which Gli Parenti is situated. Some musket-shots fired from the opposite side led us to imagine that the attack was commenced in that quarter. Accordingly we marched in quick-time, and with the more ardour, as we hoped to surprise the notorious bandit, and destroy his horde. But by one of those fatalities which generally mar all our expeditions of the kind—whether it was that Francatripa was forewarned of our approach, or did not think himself sufficiently secure in this haunt, it is certain he had made his escape by three in the morning, thus baffling all our projects. The soldiers, who had hoped to get possession of a rich booty, comforted themselves with the discovery of a cave containing an abundance of provisions and excellent wine. The shots which had seemed to announce the presence of Francatripa were fired at some peasants whom our soldiers took for brigands. One of these peasants, or brigands, (terms which in this country are nearly synonymous,) being wounded in the leg, and fearing our men intended to put him to death, discovered the magazine of provisions, on condition of his life being spared."

The village of Gli Parenti, surrounded by lofty mountains and furious torrents, and commanded by the ruins of an old castle, presents to the eye one of

those savage situations which fill the soul with that secret horror the gloomy pictures of Mrs. Radcliffe can so well inspire.

BENINCASA AND OTHERS.

A FEW weeks after this nocturnal expedition, the author of the Letters and the corps to which he belonged, marched to Nicastro, near the bay and the forest of Saint Euphemia. The latter had for ages been the resort of banditti. The French officer found it frequented by a robber more daring and formidable even than Francatripa, who had led him such a dance to Gli Parenti.

“Never am I destined,” says he, “to have done with that eternal plague of Calabria—brigandage. The forest of Saint Euphemia is generally known as the haunt of one of the most active of the bandit chiefs. This forest, extremely thick, and with a swampy soil, is a mysterious labyrinth, of which none but the brigands possess the clue. So complex and intricate are its numberless avenues, and so obstructed with underwood, which is absolutely impenetrable when defended by an armed force, that our troops have never been able to open a way through the forest. An old villain, named Benincasa, the most noted of all the Calabrian brigands, is the great leader of all the hordes that infest this dangerous quarter. He was loaded with murder and crime long before the arrival of the French in the country, and only escaped justice by flying to the woods and rallying round him a numerous and desperate band of assassins. Last autumn an attempt was made to destroy this frightful haunt; and to ensure success, it was determined to treat with Benincasa, and offer him and his associates very advantageous terms; but the

business has proceeded so slowly, and with so little address, that nothing effectual has yet been accomplished; while these brigands, fearing to be routed from their den, have again taken to the open country, after having committed all sorts of atrocities."

About a month after our author's arrival at Nicastro, the garrison of that town was so weakened by being obliged to send out large detachments with every courier, and with every person employed in levying the contributions, (for, reversing the old adage of the Swiss, *point de soldats, point d'argent*) that only about fifty men, including invalids, remained behind. The Commandant had the forethought to get the officers together in a strong stone chapel, attached to a church, that served as a barrack for the soldiers. It was well for them he did so, for about the midnight-hour the tranquillity of Nicastro was disturbed by the discharge of fire-arms and hideous yells.

All the brigands of the neighbourhood were approaching the prison in a body, in the hope of releasing their relations, who were detained there as hostages; but the guard received them with a murderous fire, which soon slackened their ardour. As it was to be expected they would make a similar attack upon the barrack, the Commandant proposed that we should anticipate them, by rushing out to give them battle. Accordingly, we sallied out, to the number of seventeen, armed from top to toe. The darkness and confusion suffering us to approach without being perceived, we discharged a volley at a vast assemblage of persons, who, in an instant, betook themselves to flight, panic-struck, and leaving many dead or wounded on the spot. The inhabitants of Nicastro, by their culpable inactivity, seemed to favour the surprise. After this affair shall have been reported to our general-in-chief, they must expect to be treated with the greatest rigour; but, if our safety

depends on making them in some degree responsible, we must still in fairness admit, that the situation of the landed proprietors of this country is most deplorable. Independently of the hatreds and feuds so common among the Calabrians, they employ against each other the most odious means of vengeance, making the brigands their sanguinary agents. Benincasa, the natural protector of all the enemies of the French, and the formidable destroyer of the property of all those who seem to favour them, has established an arbitrary sway over the political opinions and conduct of private individuals. Like a ferocious beast of prey, he darts forth from his lair at night, and the day never fails to discover some new act of savage treachery—some new disaster! The landholders are obliged to conduct themselves with the greatest address towards the brigands, and silently to submit to their exactions of provisions and money. On the other hand, this conduct necessarily subjects them to a rigid surveillance, by the French commanding-officers, who, on suspicion of their being the authors or abettors of brigandage, very frequently cast them into prison.”

Communications by means of post had become most uncertain. The author of the Letters, and his comrades at Nicastro, had long been expecting the arrival of a courier from Naples. At last he arrived, safe and sound; but he did not so reach Monteleone, the next military station, for which he departed forthwith. The escort consisted of thirteen voltigeurs and a serjeant who commanded them. Three of the men marched a-head, who, while they were reconnoitring the entrance of a ravine, were fired upon and brought to the ground before they could give the alarm. The next moment the detachment saw itself surrounded on every side; and the next, the courier, the serjeant, and eight voltigeurs were killed. Five men escaped,

and breathless carried the news of the massacre back to Nicastro. The Commandant sent the author of the Letters in pursuit; he had the mortification of finding his unfortunate countrymen weltering in their blood, without any signs of life; their post-bags stripped of their contents, and an immense number of letters, torn to pieces and stained with blood, scattered about on the ground; but he was obliged to return to Nicastro without the satisfaction of so much as seeing a single Calabrian.

After relating this catastrophe, he informs his correspondent that brigandage is indeed carried to its utmost pitch of horror; that he cannot take a walk in the suburbs of the town, no matter how short the distance,—that he cannot stir beyond the walls of Nicastro, some of whose inhabitants are always on the alert to inform the robbers of the slightest movements of the French,—without an escort. On returning to the mountainous district about Rogliano, where he had first heard of Francatripa, he was informed that that bandit had fled from the country. The French having failed in all their expedients to rid themselves of him, succeeded at last in buying over some of the robber's band, who engaged to deliver him into their hands, dead or alive; but Francatripa had even the address and good fortune to save himself from the treachery of his own men, and no longer relying on his band, contrived to retreat to an impenetrable lurking-place in the forest of Saint Euphemia, whence he soon effected his escape to Sicily, carrying with him, it was said, a considerable amount of treasure. His place in Calabria was soon supplied. Parafante, the chief of another band, by uniting the remains of Francatripa's *commitiva* to his own, became still more formidable than that bandit had been. His nightly incursions were frequently pushed as far as the entrance of Rogliano, where the French were obliged

to keep up a guard on every point. Expedition after expedition, sent against the outlaw, utterly failed. At last the Commandant thought he was sure of him! One morning a Calabrian priest, from some place in the neighbourhood, waited on this officer, and with a very mysterious air told him he had some important disclosures to make.

The worthy ecclesiastic began by exhibiting a number of certificates from French officers vouching for his good faith. Then coming to the point, he told the Commandant he was the sworn enemy of the brigand Parafante, who was the murderer of many members of his family; he assured him he had an understanding with several of the robber's followers, and that, of a certainty, he would cause him to fall into the hands of the French. Parafante, he added, was at that moment in the immediate neighbourhood, waiting the ransom of a thousand ducats for a rich proprietor his band had seized. The money was to be paid that very night, and the priest proposed to lay such a snare for them, that the robbers could not escape. It was agreed, then, that a detachment of a hundred men should set off that night under favour of silence and darkness, and the guidance of a man of the priest's recommending. The Commandant, in giving the necessary orders to the author of the Letters, who was to command the detachment, agreed that it would be imprudent to trust implicitly to an unknown priest, and that inquiries concerning him should be made. The result of these inquiries went to establish that the zealous ecclesiastic was a notorious intriguer, on whom no reliance whatever could be placed. The French officers then sounded the guide whom the priest had appointed to conduct the detachment. By threats and promises this man was induced to declare that the priest, his master, was in the pay of the brigands, and had no other object than

to divert the French troops from Rogliano, in order to facilitate some profitable enterprise which Parafante sought to effect, during their absence, in that neighbourhood. The author of the Letters, with a number of soldiers, ran immediately to the house where the ecclesiastic had taken up his lodgings; but quick as they were, the priest had got the start of them—he was nowhere to be found. They then bound his unfortunate agent, the guide, with strong cords, and forced him, under the penalty of being shot, to lead them in the direction which the brigands were really to take. At one hour after midnight, the detachment was placed in ambush: not a whisper on their part, not the sight of so much as the tip of a shackò, revealed their presence. They had not been long in this profound silence when a confused noise announced the approach of the brigands. They remained quiet and motionless until the unsuspecting band was fairly within musket-shot; then the detachment fired a full volley, and with such tremendous effect, that a great number of the robbers fell, killed or wounded. The soldiers then rushing from their place of concealment, attacked them with the bayonet, when they took to precipitous flight, uttering the most frightful cries. Their chief Parafante, however, was neither among the killed nor the wounded; he was not even among those who had sustained this murderous attack, having led another portion of his band by a different route. But the shots and cries of terror he must have heard, forced him to give up the expedition he was bent upon, and the losses they sustained had the effect of keeping the brigands in check, in that part of Calabria, for some time.

The French found plenty of money on the greater part of the dead and wounded. They set a price on the head of the priest who had attempted to deceive them, but it is not stated that they ever caught him.

Our author's next encounter with the Calabrians, whom, in this instance, from their great numbers, he styles "insurgents," was at a distant and still wilder part of the Apennines, at Longo-Bucco, a place he describes as presenting the very image of chaos; where nothing is seen but mountains rising in confused piles, and terminating in peaks; huge, overhanging rocks, which threaten to crush and bury the wretched little villages beneath them, and torrents which roar from the bottom of deep and gloomy glens.

The French, who had marched in two columns from the town of Rossano, and by the most frightful approaches, effected a junction as the bells of all the mountain villages were beginning to sound the tocsin. They soon afterwards dispersed with their regular and formidable charge a crowd of armed peasants who had taken possession of the plateau of a commanding mountain. At nightfall, they reached an eminence whence Longo-Bucco was visible, situated, far below them, in a narrow, deep valley, traversed in its length by a furious torrent rushing tumultuously over enormous rocks. The gigantic wooded mountains surrounding the dreadful gorge, gave to it a still more gloomy and savage character. The French passed the night upon the heights, (it was a cold night in the month of November!) establishing an extensive line of fires, in order to impress the Calabrians with the idea that they had a larger force than they really had. While they were shivering on the mountain tops, the wildest confusion prevailed in the narrow valley at their feet. Lights were seen hurrying here and there; shrieks of terror resounded on every side. The inhabitants, expecting that the French would come upon them by night with fire and sword, were running about in the confusion of panic or madness, seeking to place their property and their persons in security. The French, however, did not descend into

the dreadful abyss until daylight, when two hundred men were detached, and entered the village of Longo-Bucco, which was entirely evacuated, save by a few old men and the curate. These presented themselves to implore mercy for the village, and for its inhabitants who had fled. The French commandant made the curate the medium of a negotiation. The villagers were to lay down their arms and return to their homes, where the troops engaged not to molest them. By degrees the greater part did so return, and tranquillity was established for a while at Long-Bucco without bloodshed or plunder. The rest of this narrative, for more reasons than one, will be better given in the precise words of our author and hero.

“However,” continues he, “the two chiefs of the insurrection still held out. Our Commandant, hoping to bring them to terms, wrote to them to the effect that, if they would dismiss their bands, they might meet him in perfect security. Seeing that they still persisted in revolt, he determined to proceed and attack them in a village where a numerous body of *rebels* had assembled. In execution of his plan, he set out on the evening of the 5th of November, with four hundred men, pretending that he was going towards Bochigliero; but on the approach of night, suddenly changing his route, he conducted us by a rapid and well-combined movement to the point occupied by the insurgents, who very fortunately had no intimation of our advance. The village where they had taken refuge was surrounded in silence, and as day broke we marched to its attack. The village hung like an eagle’s nest from the verge of a rock. While we were endeavouring to parley with the insurgents, who answered our words of peace with musket shot, a great tumult was heard from the interior of the village. It was occasioned by the unexpected appearance of about twenty of our soldiers, who had

just entered, after having climbed over almost inaccessible rocks. In an instant the cry of 'storm!' 'storm!' was heard on all sides. We hastened on to the village, which is in a great part surrounded by a high wall, and, in spite of a very hot fire, that in a few minutes killed or wounded more than twenty of our men, the gate was broken down by our sappers, the soldiers spread through the street like an overwhelming torrent, and then commenced a horrible massacre, which was rendered inevitable by the obstinacy of the insurgents, who kept up an incessant fire from all the houses.

“ This unfortunate village, sacked and burned, experienced, indeed, all the horrors inseparable from a place taken by storm. The curate, a great number of women, children, and old men, luckily effected their escape into a church, to which a party of officers had repaired for the purpose of protecting this asylum from the brutality of the soldiers. Our loss in this affair has been considerable; but that of the insurgents, who are now almost destroyed, is upwards of two hundred men. A great number, hoping to save themselves by climbing up the rugged back of the mountain, perished in the attempt; but, unfortunately, the principal persons having again succeeded in effecting their escape, we were obliged to start immediately in pursuit of them, in order to prevent fresh machinations on their part; and the detachment marched upon Bochiglierò, a large town, better situated, and more populous than Longo-Bucco, but which had still taken an active part in these disturbances. The news of our success had preceded us to this place. Thrown into consternation, the inhabitants hastened to send us a deputation, composed of all the leading authorities, and the most influential individuals in the country. The Commandant, wishing to avail himself of the first moment of terror to disarm this commune,

threatened to send the whole deputation as hostages to the castle of Cosenza, if all the arms in the country were not delivered to him. In less than one hour three thousand stand were given up and burned. A hundred men have remained at Bochigliero, and we have returned to Longo-Bucco. To render this painful victory complete, nothing has been wanting but the capture of the principal leaders of the insurrection. A price is set upon their heads. Within the last two days we have been joined by a swarm of subordinate *employés*, who have come for the purpose of raising taxes in the district in every possible way. They are now running over the country guarded by detachments of soldiers that meet no resistance."

The next adventure was much less tragical. The Commandant, the author of the Letters, and the other French officers, had all become acquainted at Rossano with a little Calabrian. One might have fancied, from the trick already put upon them, that they had had enough of priests; but this second friend and confidant was an ecclesiastic—a jolly Abbot, round-paunched, animated, intelligent, and amusing. He was on such very friendly terms with them, indeed, that he accompanied them to Longo-Bucco; for it was understood he possessed a perfect knowledge of the country, and he had offered to render them every service in his power. By the management of some trifling affairs, in which he showed considerable zeal and talent, the little rogue gained the heart and the entire confidence of the Commandant, whose mind was still set on getting the two leaders of the late movements into his hands.

“One morning the wily monk told him he was the man who would do this, if the Commandant would but entrust him with the charge of a detachment. He knew the obnoxious individuals to be concealed at a farmhouse not many leagues from the spot, and all that he

required for his own personal safety, was to be allowed to march in the French ranks disguised as a soldier.

“The Commandant, far from suspecting any perfidy, eagerly adopted a project which presented great chances of success. Behold us, then, setting about transforming our little Abbot into a soldier (the Abbot must have laughed at them in his sleeve), laughing most heartily at this masquerade-scene. No part of the uniform belonging to the lowest-sized voltigeur could be found to fit him. The great coat trailed down to his heels, the schakos covered his ears, the cartouch-box descended to his hams, and he bent under the weight of the musket, which his delicate hands scarcely dared to touch. Every thing, however, was soon adjusted for him, and the wag, completely disguised, set off in high glee, with a detachment of five-and-twenty men, under the command of an officer. After leading our soldiers about from village to village, through dreary fastnesses and in dreadful weather, and after making them lie concealed for a whole day in a wood, he suddenly resumed his monk's dress, under the pretext that he was going to look out for some information, and disappeared—never to return.”

It was soon ascertained that the ingenious Abbot had assumed this masquerade, and borne these military fatigues, for the sole object of levying contributions, in the Commandant's name, on all the most wealthy proprietors of the neighbourhood. Our Author of the Letters is exceedingly indignant at this; and yet, perhaps, the Abbot had only been seduced by the force of French example, and had not the “rare honesty” to see their “swarms of subordinate employés” running about the country, “raising taxes *in every possible manner*,” without the wish and the attempt to go and do likewise. The narrator of the very amusing story adds—“The indignation of

the Commandant, and the officer who went with the detachment, may be easily imagined, since their *honour* might be compromised under circumstances of such vile deception. The description of the arrant knave has been sent about in all directions, and woe be to him if he should fall into our hands." The Abbot, of course, was no such fool. We hear no more about him from the French officer.

The Commandment, however, was determined to have the heads of the two chiefs. His troops had spent a month in scouring the country, to no purpose. They were now in all the horrors of winter, which season is indeed most horrid while it lasts among those mountains, spite of their southern latitude, and our notions of the eternal sunshine of Italy. They were continually enveloped in snow and thick mist, the rain fell in torrents, inundating the narrow valley of Longo-Bucco, and to such a degree that all communication from house to house was intercepted. In short, their stay at Longo-Bucco became more and more insupportable. To accelerate, therefore, their departure thence, the French had recourse to "fresh measures of severity," (our author does not inform us what these measures were,) and this at last goaded on the inhabitants to pursue in earnest the two obnoxious fugitives, for they found they should never get rid of the soldiers and their violence, except by giving them up. On the 6th of December, therefore, at daybreak, "the Commandant was startled by the serjeant of the guard who entered his bed-room, accompanied by two men, each of whom held by the hair a head reeking with gore. Rising suddenly from his couch, he was filled with horror on beholding this hideous spectacle. The two chiefs had fallen that very night into a snare which had been artfully prepared for them, and had thus become victims to the cowardly treachery and reckless cruelty

of their own partisans:" which treachery and cruelty, we would add, were forced upon them for self-preservation, by the French, who would not depart without those heads—as our author himself has declared.

The next adventure he relates has much of the picturesqueness, but none of the horror of the last. He had returned to Maida. It was nearly a year after the expedition to Longo-Bucco.

"Our companies are dispersed through the villages which surround St. Euphemia, and some that are detached at the foot of the mountains, have daily encounters with the brigands. We are not over anxious to pursue those in our immediate neighbourhood, for they never trouble us. However, we have availed ourselves of this favourable circumstance, to make a somewhat curious expedition.

"A few days ago, the owner of the house where I lodge, came to inform me that the brigands of the forest of St. Euphemia had sent an emissary to treat for the ransom of several herds of cattle, which were carried off from some private individuals of the commune. He proposed that the Commandant should have this person arrested, and that he should be compelled to conduct us through the secret passages of the forest. This advice, given only with the view of getting back the cattle without paying any ransom for them, might still be turned to advantage. The brigands' messenger was arrested that very night, and brought before the Commandant. The fear of a bullet, and the formal promise that he should have part of the booty, soon made him so tractable, that he engaged to stand to be shot with his hands tied behind his back, if, when the expedition was once undertaken, he did not make it succeed. I myself directed the officers to proceed to the place appointed: the soldiers were awakened without any noise, and at eleven o'clock at night we left the precincts of Maida, making our way

silently along the banks of the Amato. We crossed this river a short distance from the forest, which we entered, conducted by our guide, and favoured by a fine clear moonlight. We had at first to open a way through a mass of thick brushwood, and then cross a swamp, the mire of which emitted a most fetid stench. Arrived at a deep ditch, the guide, guarded by some men, passed over to the other side for the purpose of seeking among the bushes for the beams and planks by means of which the brigands cross such places. This was a tedious operation. Daylight approached, and at a distance was heard the reiterated barking of a great number of dogs. Scarcely had some soldiers gained the opposite side of the ditch, and formed on a narrow bank, when musket-shots, discharged from the forest, and followed by hideous yells, plainly told us that the brigands were aware of our approach. No time was to be lost: we rushed upon this bank head foremost. A new ditch arrested our progress, and ascertaining it was only four feet deep, we crossed it rapidly, while the first rays of the sun lighted us on our urgent march through a forest of very high trees. We soon arrived at a circular spot, surrounded with underwood, and protected from the heat of the sun by thick foliage. Here we at length found ourselves in the very centre of this den of bandits. The branches of the trees were covered with hammocks; horses, mules, and asses, were tied by the bridle to the trees; quarters of beef and mutton were in the process of being roasted round a huge fire; sacks of bread, cheese, and bacon, lay upon the ground, together with several hogsheads of wine. In short, we found provisions of all kinds, but the brigands had fled. We beheld, as traces of their precipitate flight across the broken thickets, some hats which had been caught by the branches, and also tatters of dress. On endeavouring to track the line through the morass, where

these things were found, we were assured by the guide that he had never before been further in advance, and that he did not know the secret haunts of Benincasa, the chief of this horde: we were, therefore, obliged to content ourselves with the possession of his kitchen. We did due honour to the feast that was prepared there; but perceiving that heads were getting hot, and the feet of many of the soldiers beginning to be unsteady, it was necessary to think of retiring. This was the more prudent, since the guide observed that the brigands, lurking all around, and protected by the impossibility of our penetrating into their fastnesses, might very easily let fly a shower of balls among us. Having loaded the mules and asses with the booty, we retired safe and sound from this mysterious labyrinth, covered, it is true, with mire and mud, but still with the slight glory of being the first to explore it. It is wonderful how men can accustom themselves to live in such a place, without being consumed by pernicious fevers, and insects of every kind. The love of independence, or the fear of punishment, can alone effect this prodigy. While we were making our way into this forest, a part of the detachment that ran along the skirts of it, found a great number of oxen and sheep, the produce of robberies committed in the neighbouring plains. Those that belonged to the commune of Maida, were restored to the owners, and the remaining animals being sold by auction, brought the detachment more than three hundred piastres. The guide has been liberally rewarded, and as we are all well assured that he will never again venture to show his face in this community of bandits, we have given him his liberty."

SCAROLLA.

LITTLE more than a month after the adventures in the forest of St. Euphemia, Calabria was inundated by new partisans and adventurers. The author of the Letters calls them all brigands, as usual, and abuses the English in Sicily for co-operating with them. The force, however, for the greater part, did not consist of professional robbers, but of Bourbonists of Calabria and other disaffected provinces. They were commanded by a certain Scarolla, who styled himself "Chief of the Independents of Basilicata." "His dress," says the French officer, "was gorgeous, and he was followed by a great number of saddle-horses and mules, which, they said, carried considerable treasure. Here then, at length, was a chief worthy to measure swords with, and, what was still more important, a rich booty to be seized. What a stimulus for our soldiers! Though they had already marched thirty miles, they demanded to set out again after having taken a little rest, and at four o'clock in the morning they were in full march, following the route which this horde had pursued. We could not miss the way, for numberless broken-down animals marked out the perilous paths which traverse these horrible mountains."

Having toiled on from four in the morning till nightfall, the French gained the top of a mountain covered with wood, and thought, at last, they were sure of those they pursued; for from a deep gorge through which brawled a mountain stream, they heard a confused noise, which indicated the presence of a numerous assemblage of men, who, from their position, they judged could be no others than the brigands.

Circumstances favoured an attack by surprise. Two columns of fifty men each were marched to the opposite end of the gorge to fall on their rear or harass their retreat, while the rest of the French were to attack them in front. But scarcely had they begun to move to this effect, when some shots whizzed by their officer—the author of the Letters. The officer hastened his pace, and ascertained that the shots had been fired by a group of peasants who had accompanied the French, and pretended to act as guides, but who now, having given the alarm to their friends the brigands, were flying across the wild country. He then heard a tremendous uproar rise from the dark, deep gorge, where the outlaws were making every possible exertion to secure their plunder, and betake themselves to flight.

“Not an instant was to be lost. Our troops hurried rapidly down from the mountain, and precipitated themselves into the torrent. We soon found ourselves mingled pell-mell with them in that state of disorder and confusion which is inseparable from an attack in the night-time; and the glimmering light of the shots that were fired on all sides, enabled us to see them running off at the top of their speed. The columns appointed to cut off their retreat not having arrived on the spot, and the darkness of the night preventing all pursuit, these brigands regained without further impediment, but not without considerable loss, the mountains of the Syla. Next day, we found several brigands dead or dying, and the soldiers brought in a great number of mules and asses, but which, unfortunately, conveyed no part of the treasures of Scarolla: they were loaded, however, with his canteens, and to these we did ample justice.”

Scarolla and his horde retreated through the Calabrias, followed in vain by the French, who could not again come up with them. They thence threw them-

selves across still wilder mountains, and entered without molestation the States of the Church. They had established themselves on the steep heights of Monte Polino, to rest awhile after their extraordinary fatigues, when, directed merely by chance, a French moveable column, employed on altogether different business, surprised them in a profound sleep, and killed great numbers of them. The remainder were routed on all sides, and the French soldiers obtained so considerable a booty, that they were seen playing at *petits-palets* with Spanish doubloons. Scarolla did not fall then, but he was so severely wounded as to be obliged to take refuge with some shepherds, who, for a thousand ducats, gave him up to the French. He was hanged shortly after.

Such was the indomitable spirit of the Calabrians, that when King Murat was at the extremity of their peninsula with a formidable French and Neapolitan army, with which he was to beat the English and take Sicily, they again revolted, and rose in his rear. His communication with the capital was continually intercepted, and he was obliged to detach several battalions from his camp to proceed against the brigands, and keep the roads open. The author of the Letters, as one who had experience in these matters, was ordered to march back, and he turned his eyes with deep regret from that island of Sicily, of which the French made so sure, but which they were never to get! When he arrived in the district of Castrovillari, which is situated at the entrance into Calabria from the side of the capital, he found the whole country in the hands of the brigands, or insurgents. The inhabitants of the villages bordering on the mountain of Campotemese intercepted all communications, and plundered all the money forwarded to the camp, unless

it was protected by a very powerful escort. Our author's battalion set about occupying the mountain passes with intrenched posts. This service presented great difficulties in consequence of the nature of their positions, and the character of the inhabitants, which was still more wild and ferocious than in the other parts of Calabria; and, moreover, the French were not at all acquainted with this part of the peninsula. The first place they halted at was Mormano. Here all seemed quiet; but at night three soldiers having gone out from a church where they were quartered, were at once poniarded. The Syndic, or principal magistrate, and six other leading characters, were arrested, and because they could not, or would not, discover the assassins, were detained as prisoners. Leaving behind a body of troops in a convent as a point of retreat in case of need, the author of the Letters and the rest of the French set forward to scour the insurgent villages. They traversed some frightful mountains and yawning gorges. The continual dread of ambuscade made their march very slow. The old, the sick, and helpless alone were found in the miserable villages through which they passed; all the rest fled at their approach. It was necessary to know where these were assembling; and to this end the advanced guard seized two ferocious-looking beings employed in tending flocks, real savages, whose mountain jargon it was almost impossible to comprehend. After threatening these fellows with death, the French contrived to learn from them that a gathering of several thousand men waited their approach in a defile which they must necessarily pass. The French advanced with rapidity, and by making a detour, forcing their way through almost impervious woods, they came, unexpected, on a multitude of peasants who were lying on the ground, most of them fast asleep, and all without order or preparation for

defence. A volley set them to flight, killing and wounding, however, some of them. The French pursued them at the bayonet's point to a deep dell, at the extremity of which stands the village of Orsomarzo.

"It would be extremely difficult," says the author of the Letters, whom I leave to narrate this last and most desperate of his adventures in Calabria, "to meet with any situation more sublimely terrific and extraordinary than the spot where this village lies engulfed. Surrounded on all sides by gigantic mountains, terminating in conical points, it seems, as it were, placed at the bottom of a vast well. The descent is by a steep flight of steps, following the windings of a torrent, which rushes down with a loud roaring, and forms grand cascades. This torrent runs through the village, whence, finding vent in the narrow cleft of a rock, it fertilises a fine well-cultivated country, which presents a most striking contrast with the horror inspired by this hideous abyss. It appears inconceivable how any human beings could ever have thought of fixing their abode in such a place. The path which follows the course of this torrent is cut through the rock; and it is impossible to engage in any conflict there with safety, unless the heights are entirely commanded at the same time. After having guarded the principal entrance of this savage retreat, by a detachment placed on the top of the only mountain on which a body of troops could be stationed, but which, unfortunately, was rather too far distant, we went down the gulf, to Orsomarzo, to look for provisions, never once imagining that the peasants, whom we had so lately routed, would venture to show themselves again, during that day. We found the village quite deserted: everything in it indicated the precipitation with which the inhabitants had fled from their homes. The doors of the greater part of the habitations were wide open, and we found in the

houses provisions of every kind. While we were employed in collecting a stock, which should serve us for several days, we heard some shots fired, and at the same instant the surrounding mountains were occupied by a multitude of armed men. The detachment stationed at the entrance of the defile had just been attacked, and obliged to abandon its position, after having many men killed and wounded; at the moment we were advancing to its assistance, it was obliged to turn towards the village with the utmost precipitation. The peasants, who were in close pursuit, had nearly established themselves before us, so as to cut off all escape from this cut-throat abyss, where we were all now crowded together without any hope of being able to open a passage on that side. The detachment then hastened to the other outlet, where it was received with a shower of stones, and enormous pieces of rock hurled down from the top of the mountain. The latter crushed before my eyes two sappers and a drummer. Seeing that we could not encounter our murderous assailants in this passage, without the risk of utter destruction, we came to the resolution of hazarding everything else to rescue ourselves from so dreadful a situation. Balls were showered upon us on all sides, and the piercing screams of women sounded horribly in our ears—screams which appeared to us those of the Furies, impatiently waiting the moment when they were to feast upon our blood. The drummers beat the charge, and we rushed towards this fatal spot with the energy of despair. The light company having crossed the torrent under a shower of balls, with extreme difficulty climbed up the steep side of a mountain, whence the incessant fire of the brigands caused us considerable loss; and at length these brave men succeeded in opening a passage for us, which nothing but the most desperate necessity could render practicable. The moment we gained the

heights, our soldiers, absolutely furious, rushed after the Calabrians with all the impetuosity of rage. The greater part of them escaped, but a numerous group assembled on the point of a rock were massacred on the spot, or perished by flinging themselves down the precipices. This unfortunate check has cost us upwards of sixty men; and, moreover, many of us have wounds and contusions, and balls that are not yet extracted. We marched during a part of the night on our return to the Convent at Mormano, before these peasants (the most determined of any we had yet encountered in Calabria) could have time to intercept us. We entered the town to the beat of the drum."

The French always make the best of their reverses, and never acknowledge a defeat; but here, according to the officer's own showing, they were soundly beaten; and if credit is to be given to some people of the country I have heard speak on the subject, the affair at Orsomarzo was still more serious than he has represented it. This was shown, indeed, by the effect produced. The insurrection spread, and the commander of the battalion was obliged to beg for reinforcements.

But shortly after this, Murat, returning humbled from his vain-glorious, futile attempt on Sicily, having embarked at the little port of Pizzo, to creep along shore towards Naples, was driven by the British cruisers under the battery of Cirella, which place, only a few days before, had been attacked and nearly taken by the Calabrians. Here he communicated with the Commandant of the station, our author's superior officer, and having praised the conduct of his troops, said that, after three years' hard service in such a country as Calabria, it was high time they should change quarters. He made a characteristic remark on the unfortunate business of Orsomarzo,—“Why did you go down into that cut-throat place?—How-

ever, you came up again like brave fellows!" and then, as soon as the English frigates let him, he continued his voyage along-shore. The author of the Letters and his comrades soon went after Murat, following the movement of the army which returned to Naples by land; and he expresses his natural delight to be at last released from a wretched exile, and from a species of warfare which offered neither glory nor promotion, and left nothing in the end save disastrous chances.

On turning his back on the mountains and brigands of Calabria, of which, it must be confessed, he has given us some interesting details, he informs us of the French plans for future proceedings there. "Extraordinary measures of severity are now to be resorted to—measures unfortunately rendered necessary by the deplorable situation of the country, but the execution of which will always be repugnant to Frenchmen. It has been clearly proved that, notwithstanding all our courage, activity, and perseverance, still we contend with great disadvantage against men born in the country, lightly armed, supported by a part of the population, and accustomed from their infancy to shoot with a deadly aim. These considerations have induced the Government to resolve upon adopting a new system, according to which the troops are only to be employed in compelling the inhabitants to extirpate the brigands of themselves, under penalty of being regarded as their accomplices and abettors. For this purpose, ten thousand men are to be spread over the two provinces," &c.

And this new system was, indeed, soon set at work, and these extraordinary measures of severity soon deluged Calabria anew with blood. In the French General Manhes, Joachim Murat found the very man to superintend or direct these massacres *en masse*, and the Calabrians the most ruthless

enemy that had ever been let loose upon them. I have heard stories in the country that would make humanity shudder—for the sake of that officer (he is still living), I hope these were untrue, or immensely exaggerated. Yet it remains undisputed, and has even been admitted by those who served under him or with him, that Manhes was a cruel, pitiless man to the Calabrians, the people of the Abruzzi, &c., and acted up to a system of blood without once relenting. No mercy was ever extended to the outlaws who fell into his hands. Villages, whole towns, through which the inhabitants had allowed the brigands a passage, felt his tremendous vengeance. Any peasant, without distinction of sex or age, who was found going out to labour in the country, with more than a small flask of wine and a morsel of bread, calculated to be just sufficient to support life for one day, was taken and shot; for Manhes, having made pretty sure of the towns and villages, whence the brigands could no longer supply themselves, thought if he could prevent the peasantry from smuggling out provisions to them, that they must either surrender themselves, or die of want in the mountain fastnesses to which he had driven them. If an honest man concealed, or corresponded with, or aided the escape of an outlaw—no matter, were it his own father, or son, or brother, he was forthwith executed. On one occasion, when a condemned brigand had escaped from the capella, or chapel, where it is usual to place criminals the night before their execution, he shot the priest who had been with him, alleging that he must have aided the robber in his flight.

By unusual severity like this, Manhes boasted he put down brigandism in Calabria. The boast was partly made out by fact.

THE VARDARELLI.

THREE brothers of this very respectable name enjoyed a higher and a longer celebrity than any, even of the Calabrian banditti, and may, perhaps, be entitled to the rank of the first brigands in modern times, of Naples—*i. e.* of Europe.

Hitherto their deeds have not met with regular historians; but the following are among the stories regarding them, which I picked up in the country. They may be considered as contemporary records, for, when I collected them, the brigand-brothers were alive, and pursuing their vocation with admirable activity.

The Vardarelli were of the superior class of peasantry—good Catholics, and faithful subjects of his Majesty Ferdinand IV.—at least, so they styled themselves, when, during the French occupation of the kingdom, irritated, some say, by the oppression of the foreigners, they took to the road, and levied contributions, after the manner of their loyal countrymen in Calabria. They did not, it is true, confine their operations to the despoiling of the French and the officers of government—but then the mass of the Neapolitan nation became infected with Gallic principles, and untrue to the legitimate King—consequently amenable to the vengeance of the Vardarelli, as long as they had anything to lose.

The birth-place of these heroes was said to be somewhere in the mountains of the Abruzzi; but the spot where they first made themselves known as public characters, and which their exploits rendered famous for so many years, was the valley of the Bridge of Bovino—a long, narrow pass, through

which runs the only road from Naples to the vast plains of Apulia, the province of Bari, Lecce, &c. I passed by the Ponte di Bovino early in the year 1816, when the mere mention of its name caused fear and trembling. I have been there several times since; the last time in 1824, when the vigilance and severity of General del Carretto had decorated it with the heads and mangled quarters of some half dozen of more modern, but less conspicuous brigands. It always struck me as being an admirable place for robbers—a circumstance equally perceptible to the people of the country; for though they have ceased since the days of the Vardarelli to form organised bands there, they have never failed *de tems en tems* to lie in ambuscade, and commit robberies. The pass is in general steep, and in some points very narrow; a deep ravine, through which froths and roars a mountain stream in the winter season, is on one side of the road—hills covered with trees or underwood lie on the other. In its whole length, which may be about fifteen miles, there are no habitations, save some curious caves cut in the face of the rock, a post-house, and a most villanous-looking taverna, where, as I shall presently show, I once passed a night—and that, too, when my head was full of Mrs. Radcliffe, and banditti, and I quite new in the country. In some places the hill and the wood, or concealing thicket, is so close on the road on the one hand, and the ravine on the other, that it is really quite enticing. A shot from the one, and the man's business is done—and there yawns a dark, capacious grave, to receive his body when deprived of what it is worth. And then, as regards security, who would follow the experienced robber through the mountain-wood, or down the ravine, or be able to trace him to the hiding-places and holes in the rocks that abound there? Across the mountains he has a wide range of savage country—

without roads—without a path: on the other side of the chasm the localities are equally favourable; here he can, if hard-pressed and long, throw himself into the impenetrable forests of Mount Garganus, there into the not less remote and safe recesses of Monte Voltur.

Over the narrowest part of the valley, situated on the summit of a lofty and abrupt mountain, frown the dark walls of the town of Bovino, like the castle of a feudal chief—the more honoured robber of earlier times. I never went up to the town, but I well remember that its inhabitants had a very bad name.

In this valley, then, the Vardarelli remained for many years, and many years will yet pass ere the traveller shall traverse it without hearing stories about them. During the short reign at Naples of Joseph Buonaparte, or,

“ In good King Joseph’s days, when ’twas the fashion
To *kill* the French, poor people! to excess,”

these robbers were so formidable, they so entirely commanded the valley of Bovino, that rarely could a company of travellers pass without being stopped; a Government officer, a Government mail, or the revenue from the provinces, never without a little army for an escort. And all these troops were at times unable to afford protection, but were themselves beaten off, or slaughtered by the brigands. A journey to the capital from the Apulian provinces was then to the peaceful inhabitants (always, be it said, rather timid travellers) an undertaking of solemn importance and peril; before embarking on which, not only were tapers burned under every saint of the calendar, and every Madonna that could show a portrait, but wills were made, and such tearful adieus, that one might have thought the Val di Bovino the real valley of

death, or that the wayfarers were a forlorn hope going to storm a fortress whose walls were cannon-ball and grape-shot, with gunpowder for their cement and their base.

Joseph Buonaparte once went through this pass to visit the provinces of his kingdom, situated beyond them. An immense force went with him, yet the robbers were heard to say afterwards, that had they known of the movement in time, they would have reinforced their troop with some other bands from the mountains of Basilicata and Calabria; pounced upon the false King, and, God willing, carried him off, through the provinces just named, to Sicily, to the true King Ferdinand and the English. This might have been a mere bravado. The execution of such a plan would have been a splendid episode in the annals of brigandism.

It is to be remarked, that at this time the French confidently asserted, that the brigands here, as well as in Calabria, were protected and subsidised by the British Government, and that the robber chiefs at the Ponte di Bovino were in possession of commissions signed by George III.

Joachim Murat, who succeeded his brother-in-law, whom Napoleon chose to transfer to Spain, was a man of more energy than Joseph, and with infinitely less talent contrived to render his government more popular, and indeed better, than his immediate predecessor's. He set to work vigorously against the robbers, whose party was weakened as his gained strength, and as the nation at large gradually believed that the dominion of the French was this time to be an enduring one, and began to forget their (in every way) natural sovereign, old Ferdinand.

The excursions of the robbers were checked, or limited: they could no longer range whole provinces,

but at the Ponte di Bovino they were almost invulnerable; and such were the advantages of the position, and the talents of the leaders of the band, that they continued to levy occasional contributions and to elude all the vigilance of the numerous *gendarmerie* and police scattered over the country. At times when they had not been heard of for weeks—for months—they would suddenly intercept the government *procaccio*, or carry off a party of travellers (known by them to be people of substance,) to their recesses in the mountains, where they would detain them until ransomed.

An event of the latter kind I had described to me at the not distant town of Poggia, by the Marchesa —, a native of the place, and one of the heroines of her own tale.

A marriage in the family was to take place—an important marriage, which it was determined, from various considerations, should be celebrated at the capital. Accordingly, after due preparation, every thing was ready for departure:—bride and bridegroom, fathers and mothers, *compares* and *commares*, brothers and sisters, cousins of both genders, relations, of all degrees, and friends—a formidable caravan (numerically speaking) of itself, set off one fine morning from Poggia, with a valorous escort of Neapolitan gens-d'armes. They crossed the open plain, they reached the Ponte di Bovino—the robbers had not been heard of for a long time—all was quiet! The people at the post-house, near the bridge, at the mouth of the valley, gave the most satisfactory accounts—and on the party went. They went as far as the most convenient spot for a robber's attack, but no farther; for there the cries of "*ferma assassini*," "*faccia in terra*," were heard; the mounted gens-d'armes turned their horses' heads, and galloped off, and in the next minute the whole

line of carriages was surrounded by the brigands, with their long guns in their hands, and their knives in their belts.

The general practice of these robbers, when no more than personal spoliation is contemplated, is to make their patients lie down on the ground, (*stare faccia in terra* technically speaking,) and then, while one set keep watch over them, with their guns double-cocked and aimed at them, another set proceed to rifle them. But now the sufferers were surrounded by a portion of the robbers, and marched up the hill's side into the woods, where they waited until the "other gentlemen" had unpacked the carriages, and brought up the valuables. They then all set off together, and after a march, very fatiguing to the Foggia gentry—particularly to the poor ladies, they halted at a large, low hut, in the middle of a thick wood. They were forced into the hut, where they found a group of women and children, and a rogue in the dress of a capuchin friar, playing at *scopo** with an old beldam. There were two or three long benches in the hut, and on these, trembling and exhausted, the party sat down. Their apprehensions were of a very horrid nature. They expected something worse than robbery and captivity; for many of the banditti began to drink wine, and to honour the ladies of the party with their very particular attention. My friend the Marchesa ——— was a younger woman then than when I had the honour of her acquaintance; the bride was very handsome, and more than one of the bride's-maids were, at least, young. Just, however, as their alarm was reaching its most exquisite point, a noise was heard without the hut, and to the sounds of Don Gaetano, Don Ignazio, two men, better attired, and of superior mien to the rest of the robbers, entered

* A Neapolitan game at cards, played *in duo*.

the hut, and all was silent ! They were two of the chiefs. Encouraged by the more humane aspect of these men, the husband of mine informant approached them, and begged for protection for himself and party—the ladies joined in his entreaties.

“ You have nothing to fear, Signor Marchese,” said one of the chiefs, “ you are in the hands of gentlemen, the faithful subjects of his Majesty Ferdinand IV.”

The Marchese expressed his satisfaction at the assurance, but begged he might be allowed to get out of such company, and continue his journey.

“ We know you, Signor Marchese,” said the chief, “ and that you can afford a good ransom. We must detain you here until one of your servants goes to Foggia, and returns with it to a place we shall appoint.”

This, to say the least of it, was a very uncomfortable prospect. The day was declining—it was impossible that the operations required by the robbers could be performed until the morrow, and there was no appearance of a single bed ; the hut smoked, and smelt unpleasantly of mutton, for the women had commenced roasting a whole sheep, wool and all ; in short, putting danger out of the question, and without calculating the number of ducats to be disbursed, it was a very uncomfortable prospect for the Marchese. He was feeling all this, when suddenly he was struck by the bronzed visage of a man he thought he had seen before somewhere. The Marchesa thought so too, when told to look at him. As she looked, something like a tear came to the fellow’s eyes ; he threw his long gun in a corner, and, crossing the room, took the Marchesa’s hand, and respectfully kissed it. It was Gaetano, once their servant, a man to whom they had behaved with great kindness, years before, at Foggia.

After a proper recognition, this robber took the

captains aside, and talked to them with great earnestness. His eloquence was effective. A minute or two after, the chiefs told the Marchese that he and his companions might continue their journey, after leaving, in addition to what had been taken from the carriages, the property they had about them. There was a little murmuring among the robbers; but it was the will of the chiefs that so it should be! Their voices soon imposed silence. The gentlemen and ladies, glad to be off instantly at any cost, began emptying their pockets, and unburdening themselves of every thing, save essential clothing, under the eyes of the banditti, who contented themselves by passing their hands over their persons, to feel if nothing were concealed—just as a custom-house officer may do. The young bride, however, with all her fears, was very tenacious of a pretty pair of drop ear-rings. An impatient, brutal robber, stretched out his brawny hand, and pulled at them, until she shrieked with pain. On seeing this indecorous deed, one of the chiefs, without saying a word, raised the butt-end of his musket. It descended with tremendous force on the ruffian's arm, which instantly fell helplessly by his side. It seemed broken by the blow.

The fellow uttered a cry and a horrid oath, laid his other hand to the knife in his girdle; but he merely touched it, and slunk away to the farther end of the hut, feeling, perhaps, how injudicious it would be to attempt avenging himself on a chief, and in such a place as that, where he was surrounded by men devoted to him.

The travellers then descended the hill, in matter and spirits much lighter than they ascended it. Their carriages were found where they had left them on the road, along which two or three peasants alone were riding on asses, secure in their own poverty, and indifferent to the scene of the empty carozze, and

broken boxes, and scattered packing-cases, they had just passed, and perfectly well understood, for such things were common in those days at the Ponte di Bovino.

The postilions and drivers were for the most part collected, after a little delay; the chiefs assured the company that, from the reputation of "brava gente," given to them by Gaetano, they were safe for the rest of their journey, and their return from Naples even; and la Signora Marchesa and spouse, bride, bridegroom, and all, set off as merrily as could be expected, up the pass, towards the mountain-town of Ariana, the opposite termination of the Val di Bovino.

During the remainder of the reign of Murat, who was destined himself to be put to death like a brigand in Calabria, where his officers had committed such cruelties for the extirpation of banditti, this band prosecuted their calling with greater or less activity, according to circumstances. Many were the robberies they committed, but their acts of cruelty were few. Their favourite prize continued to be the *pro-caccio*, a kind of waggon, which travels night and day to the capital, with remittances from the receivers of the different provinces; it also carries merchandise, goods, parcels, and even passengers, and is generally escorted by an armed force.

When the important revolutions in Europe of 1814 and 1815 proved again the dictum of Ariosto, that the lily of France is destined never to take root in Italy, and Murat was hurled from his throne, the Vardarelli, as faithful subjects of his restored Majesty Ferdinand, are said to have imitated the example of sundry of their *collaborateurs*, and to have proposed renouncing their calling on conditions. But it is also said that the conditions were not agreed to by the Government; and the notorious fact is, that even when there were no more Frenchmen in the kingdom,

the robbers of the Ponte di Bovino continued their depredations, paying no more respect to the revenue of Ferdinand, than they had done to Joachim's.

The first time I went through the valley of Bovino, was, as I have said, early in the year 1816, not nine months after the happy restoration alluded to, and the Vardarelli were then in high feather. God knows I heard enough of them from my fellow-travellers long before I approached the spot; and for my further edification, when, crawling over the Apulian plain, which I thought was to have no end, we came in sight of the high mountains and the town of Bovino, and the dark-looking gap beneath it, they recapitulated every horror. It was evening when we reached the post-house by the famous bridge at the mouth of the valley. Here four miserable-looking gendarmes *à pied*, with their carbines slung over their shoulders, got up in the front of our still more miserable-looking vettura, for our protection. I could not help thinking that our poverty was our best protection, as related to such a respectable band as the Vardarelli. The living part of the cargo consisted of a fat mendicant friar, a student, an old Greek woman from Corfu, who seemed to be the grandmother of all the Greek priests in the city of Lecce, where I had embarked with her; a pretty *pæšana*, who was going to see a brother at Naples, who had been promoted to the rank of serjeant in the Royal Guards; myself, and a runaway English sailor I had picked up starving at Barletta, and was carrying on to the capital. Of one thing I was quite sure—that the soldiers, in case the robbers condescended to assault us, would be the first to run away, or perform the *faccia in terra* movement, and I would about as soon have given my three carlins to the robbers as to the gendarmes, which I was obliged to do at the end of their ride. My companions, however, were sorely afraid. The wild scene, and the

time, and their whispering voices, (for the open-mouthed sonorous tones of the south had dropped into a general whisper as we went up the gloomy valley,) did at last affect me, and I was glad when we reached our station for the night, the solitary taverna, though a more desolate, cut-throat looking place can hardly be conceived.

It was about a year after this that I was wandering in the same country, but in a different manner, for I had had enough of vetturini and their passengers. I had come on horseback from Lecce to Bari with the courier or post-carrier, travelling the whole of one dark cold night and one day without stopping, except to change horses, and take a hurried morsel of food. (A very fatiguing journey, be it said, and rendered the more so by my having no English saddle with me, and from being obliged to ride on every possible variety of villanous Neapolitan machinery!) This hasty way of proceeding would not suit for the rest of the country I wished to traverse, which was very interesting, and which I had never yet examined. So at Bari I determined to hire horses by the day, and from place to place, taking a man with the second horse with me, to return the beasts, and to act as my guide. I rode in one short delightful day from Bari to Barletta. Here again my ears were filled with tales of my old friends the Vardarelli, who had become naughtier than ever. Several people persuaded me not to continue my journey as I was doing, for I was now approaching their range of country, and I had some difficulty in hiring a man and horses. The next day, however, I struck over the plain of Apulia, visited the sight of ancient Cannæ, and arrived in the afternoon at the town of Canosa, just in time to see a fight between some Carbonari and Caldarari, in which two men of the place were nearly killed, and one killed outright. What with factions and robbers this

part of the kingdom of Naples was then in a pretty state! I made Canosa my head-quarters for more than a week, exploring the country thence every day, and returning to sleep at night. Whilst staying here, the following news was received one morning and disconcerted a coursing match I had engaged in with some gentlemen of the town.

A Major ——, a Swiss officer of talent and well known courage in the service of King Ferdinand, had been sent down to Barletta with a force of light horse and light infantry, to keep the robbers in check, and if possible to destroy them. In consequence of some concerted plan, or of some hints given him, he marched from Barletta to Cerignola, a small town on the opposite side of the wild plain, a day or two after I quitted the former place. Lying quiet and *perdu* at Cerignola, he had received information in the night of the day before the news reached us at Canosa, that the Vardarelli had advanced again into the open country, and had taken possession of a *masseria*, or farm-house, not far off. He instantly put his men in motion, but it was daylight before he reached the masseria. The robbers were on the alert; they had not, however, time to saddle and mount before the place was surrounded by the troops, who might be about ten times their number. Major —— thought he had them in a trap, and sent forward a non-commissioned officer to summon them to surrender. The answer of the Vardarelli was pronounced by a musket, which wounded the soldier and sent him groaning to the rear. The Swiss then determined to storm the masseria, but the walls that surrounded it were high and strong; he had no artillery, and when his men approached the heavy entrance gate, the robbers within fired at them through loop-holes, resting their long guns in the little embrasures, with so deadly an aim, that two were left dead, and three or four wounded.

The rest ran back as fast as their legs could carry them. The bold Swiss then encouraged his troops as best he could, and headed a number of them in a fresh attack on the gate ; but his men were Neapolitans, the greater part of them slunk behind, and he himself was soon forced to fall back out of the robbers' range of fire with a wound in the hand.

While storming from the pain he suffered, and at the pusillanimity of those he commanded, to his no small surprise Major —— saw the gate a few minutes after thrown open, and the robbers issue forth well mounted and armed. Almost before he could give the word of command to concentrate, the Vardarelli dashed through the line of the beleaguers, who made way for them, and galloped across the plain. He put his cavalry in motion after them ; but the men, protesting that their horses were no match for the fresh ones of the robbers, soon drew rein. The Vardarelli then halted, and after a shout of insulting triumph, calmly trotted off towards the mountains.

This event naturally made a great noise (like the Russian drum among the Armenians in Hajji Baba,) "all over the country," and as in prosecution of my journey I had to go through the valley of Bovino again, or into the very den of the robbers, innumerable were the warnings I received. A young lady of the house where I had been staying at Canosa, thought my peril so imminent, that in bidding me farewell, and recommending me to the Madonna's protection, and pronouncing in her patois, "*Dio velo manda buono Don Carlo,*"* absolutely shed tears. But I was eighteen years of age then, and tolerably adventurous ; and, not to put my courage in too prominent a light, pretty confident that the Vardarelli would not notice a whimsical traveller with nothing but a little portmanteau and a sketch-book at his back, and a few

* God send you well through it!

ducats in his pocket. (As for the steeds I procured, two such wretched hacks were never seen since Bolingbroke mounted King Richard.) Not to be too fool-hardy, however, as my friends flattered me by saying I looked *troppo distinto* (too distinguished a personage) as I was, I procured a rough brown peasant's cloak, which I wore over my English garments, and substituted the high conical hat of the country for my travelling cap. This *travestimento* was very complete. My own mother would hardly have known me, and as I rode down the hill on which Canosa stands, I nearly tumbled over my horse's ears, by laughing at the figure I was cutting.

That evening I stopped at Castelluccio, a little village very near the Ponte di Bovino, with a reputation little superior to Bovino itself. As I rode into the village after my guide, a lazy cooper of Canosa, I met three fellows with long guns walking leisurely out of it. They stared at us, but did nothing but interchange the "*buona sera*" (good evening!) with us. My man of the butts and casks would have it they were robbers. It might have been so, for they were ill-visaged dogs, but they never troubled me, though the bugs at my hostel at Castelluccio did most cruelly.

On starting the next morning very early, my companion regretted that no chapel was open in the village where he could *rinfrascarsi l'anima con una messa*, (refresh his soul with a mass,) and when we entered into the mouth of the valley, there was no end to his crossing himself. I rode through the Val di Bovino, however, just as safely as I had done the year before, and reached the lofty town of Ariana, where all danger from robbers were supposed to cease, just as the sun was setting on one of the most extensive and lovely scenes it has been my lot to observe.

Shortly after my arrival at Naples, I learned that

King Ferdinand, whose reign had been marked by two flights from his capital and continental dominions, and numerous other humiliations, had set the final signet to his debasement, by treating with and finally signing an act of capitulation with the Vardarelli, who were thenceforth admitted to his service and pay. The whole band was allowed to form a regular corps, still commanded by the same leaders, who received a monthly salary, and engaged to secure the valley of Bovino and the provinces which they had so long ravaged, from all similar attacks for the future. People in the capital stared at each other when this news was announced, and they reflected on the qualities of the contracting parties—a Bourbon Prince, the King of the Two Sicilies, and an Abruzzese peasant, a brigand chief. But so it was! and even so weak was this despotic Government.

From the year 1817 to 1823, I never visited the robbers' country, but I am fortunate in being able to avail myself of the tour of the Honourable Richard Keppel Craven, who tracing in part my footsteps in 1818, or little more than a year after I had heard so much of their prowess at Canosa, witnessed the final extinction of the Vardarelli band in Foggia, another town in the same vast Apulian plain. Besides affording a finale to my story of the Vardarelli, Mr. Craven's sketches so confirm and endue with superior interest many points of the story itself, that I shall make free to quote from them at some length.

“The most celebrated troop of robbers in our days, was that of the Vardarelli, who infested the provinces of Apulia and the borders of Basilicata and Abruzzi, and were supposed to have collected immense wealth. To trace the progress of a life like theirs, would be a difficult but not uninteresting task: by turns, soldiers, deserters, partisans, and traitors—by turns, imprisoned, punished, penitent, restored to society, or relapsed

into guilt—exhibiting traits of singular personal bravery, united to instances of the most extraordinary cunning—and occasional proofs of disinterestedness, contrasted with rapacity the most unbridled;—the recital of their adventures would by far surpass the legends of our most illustrious highwaymen, footpads, or smugglers.

“ This band selected Apulia as the theatre best adapted to their system of depredations : its vast, uninclosed plains, occasionally interspersed with patches of underwood, but in no part offering obstacles to the rapidity of their movements ; the rare occurrence of large towns ; the magnitude of the farms or *masserias*, where they were sure to find provisions, forage, and booty united ; all these circumstances combining with their local knowledge of the country, and the terror which they had impressed on its inhabitants, had rendered their power sufficiently formidable to resist, or at least elude, the means pursued by Government for their destruction. Well armed and accoutred, and excellently mounted, their troop was also trained to the most rigid discipline ; and Don Gaetano, the elder of the brothers Vardarelli, as well as commander of the band, displayed an activity and skill worthy of a nobler profession. It should be observed that they seldom, if ever, attacked travellers ; and their outrages were generally unsullied by cruelty, except in some cases of revenge for breach of promise : but this false glare of generosity and forbearance, as well as the ample rewards which they bestowed upon their spies and abettors, and the acts of charity by which they endeavoured to propitiate the feelings of the poorer class, rendered them only a more destructive scourge to the community at large. A person who had been a severe sufferer by their misdeeds very justly observed to me, that it was very easy to give a hundred ducats to the poor out of the thousands stolen from

the rich ; and, as their generosity could be estimated by this rule only, the motives of it may be duly appreciated.

“ The Apulian farms consist of several buildings appropriated to the different branches of rural economy, which the nature of the soil admits of ; and the number of individuals employed in the various departments of labour is sometimes very great, especially during the winter season, when the cattle are all collected in the *masseria* for the sake of a milder abode. All these attendants and their superiors, including the *agente*, or what we should call the steward, reside within the walls, which always enclose these establishments. The reader may easily form some idea of the panic spread by the appearance of the Vardarelli in one of these colonies, composed chiefly of timid shepherds and their families, or labourers, as unused to the exercise as they are unprovided with the means of resistance.

“ The robbers' marches, generally performed in the night-time, were so incredibly rapid, that the terror they inspired was equalled only by the astonishment created by operations apparently supernatural ; and they have been known to have remained two or three days in one of these farms, before the inmates of those adjoining have been aware of their proximity. During this time they usually feasted on whatever the premises afforded, always obliging their inhabitants to partake of the fare prepared for them, through fear of poison. On an occasion of this nature, when the principal agents of the farm excused themselves from eating meat because it was a fast-day, Don Gaetano approved their abstinence, which, he assured them, quite agreed with his practice in general ; but alleged his mode of life, and the uncertainty of his dinner-hour, as an apology for the infraction of it. On removing from the scene of action, they always took with them what

money could be collected, and as much grain as their horses could carry.

“ Sometimes the demand, or rather command for forage, cash, provisions, and even clothes, was not made personally, but imposed through the medium of a letter to the superintendent of the farm. Neglect, or even delay, in complying with the summons, or the most distant appearance of treachery, was followed by the destruction of the cattle, and the conflagration of the buildings. In these cases the mandate was confided to a peasant or labourer, whom the troop might meet accidentally. Frequently they would stop passengers, and exact the exchange of good fresh horses against their own jaded ones: while more than once they have merely bartered their silver against an equivalent sum in gold which might be found upon the person of the traveller*.”

For some time after their treaty with King Ferdinand, the Vardarelli very correctly kept their part of the engagement, and no robberies were heard of at the Ponte di Bovino, or in that neighbourhood. There was, however, a long accumulated account of vengeance scored against them in the hearts of many individuals who had suffered from their rapacity or violence; the Government, moreover, was said both to fear that by some sudden revulsion they would adopt their old modes of life, and to nourish a vindictive feeling against the men who had foiled them so often. Indeed, it was currently reported in the capital at the time, that the quarrel, in which the daring brothers fell, was excited by the treacherous emissaries of Government, who thus hoped to rid themselves of the Vardarelli without the open odium of treachery and cruelty to men they had honoured with a capitulation. Either of these causes might have produced the effect, or it might very well have been produced by a union

* Tour through the Southern Provinces of Naples.

of the two. Mr. Craven only alludes to the more apparent one.

“ But it was not to be expected that so lawless a confederation should long continue faithful to their engagements, or that the inhabitants, smarting under the infliction of outrages so recent, should ever look upon the authors of them with any feelings but those of mistrust or revenge; in fact, about a month previous to my quitting Naples, they had been engaged in a serious contest with the natives of an Albanian* village, called Ururi, on the borders of the Abruzzo; and these last, rising in superior numbers, killed the three brothers with nine of the troop, and compelled the remainder to seek their safety in flight.

It was said that the principal promoter of this affray had lost his father by the hands of the Vardarelli. From that period the remnant of the band had retired to the neighbouring mountains, and had, under various pretences, eluded the order which they received, to unite, and present themselves at a stated spot, where the affair should be investigated. Aware, probably, of having been the aggressors in the conflict which terminated so fatally to their leaders, or distrustful of the intentions of Government, they had delayed obeying its commands; and I had purposely retarded my departure from the capital, to avoid the risk of falling in with them on their way to the head-quarters of the district†, where it was expected that by this time they might in all probability have arrived. At Troja, indeed, I was induced to look upon this event as cer-

* There are several colonies of these Albanians, who have emigrated at different times, in the Southern Provinces of the Kingdom of Naples. They retain their own language, which they always speak among themselves, but they all speak the language of the country as well. They are a fine, robust race, and have the reputation of being daring fellows! I have seen some of their women eminently beautiful.

† Foggia.

tain, for that portion of their corps, which was dismounted, consisting of about thirteen, had assembled there a short time before*.”

We are now come to “the last scene of all, which ends this strange eventful history,” and here Mr. Craven’s narrative possesses the interest that only an eye-witness can give.

“At last I arrived at Foggia, the capital of the Capitanata, which has gates, but no walls, the houses being so irregularly scattered about, that it is difficult to fix precisely where the town begins. I could find no lodgings at the numerous inns which displayed their signs on either side of me, but were already filled by the arrivals for the ensuing fair, so that I had penetrated some way into the city before there appeared any chance of being accommodated at all; when, just as I had turned out of a street, or rather square, in which I had observed some troops drawn out as for a parade, a sudden volley of musketry, which I took for the crash of a building falling, followed by a general flight of the inhabitants, uttering cries of terror and dismay, arrested my attention: soon after, a gentleman hurrying by, desired me to alight, which I did, though utterly unable to guess the motive of this advice; while a second as strenuously recommended my remounting my horse and galloping away. The first idea that darted across my mind was that of an earthquake, and a number of persons rushing at once out of an adjoining house tended to confirm it. I walked on, in vain addressing the fugitives who passed me in every direction, till a boy took my horse’s bridle and led him through some obscure by-streets

* In the streets of Troja, Mr. Craven saw two of the Vardarelli band, whose stature and martial air, heightened by a picturesque but irregular uniform, attracted his attention to a degree which his guide thought it prudent to repress, by informing him of their quality and profession.

to an inn at the skirts of the town, where we took refuge in a room on the ground-floor, into which my servants and guide, together with all the horses and myself, entered as if by one common instinct, but still in total ignorance of the cause of alarm. The cries of several women, tearing their hair, and the incoherent exclamations they uttered, among which I could only distinguish the word *brigands*, at last led me to conjecture that a party of banditti had forced their way into the town, and were engaged with the regular troops. The door had been carefully barricaded at the moment of our entrance; but through the small windows several soldiers were observable lurking about in parties, with their muskets ready, and at times a dragoon passed at full gallop, apparently engaged in pursuit. These circumstances, and occasional musket-shots, confirmed my suspicions; but that a gang of robbers, however daring and desperate, should have made an attack at mid-day on a large city respectably garrisoned, seemed so improbable that I continued in a state of doubt, till the son of my hostess made his appearance; and after being repeatedly kissed and wept upon by his mother and her dishevelled companions, he gave me a clearer insight into the affair, by relating, in an imperfect manner, the details, which were subsequently made known to me from a source more authentic, and which are as follows.

“The remainder of the Vardarelli band had presented themselves that morning at Foggia; they formed, in fact, part of the troops I had seen, and were at the moment I passed engaged in a war of words, which soon was waged with more deadly weapons. It seems that the general, who had received the intimation of their arrival, gave orders for them to be inspected the instant it took place. After they had dismounted and given a satisfactory account of their late proceedings, they received directions to

repair to Lucera, and there await further commands. This mandate they positively refused to obey, and a long altercation took place between them and an officer sent from the commander's house, before which they were ranged, to remonstrate on the imprudence, not to say temerity, of their behaviour. The general finally commanded the two leaders to repair to his own apartment to speak to them : this they objected to do without their arms, which they declared they would never part from ; and it is supposed that the language they made use of in the course of their argument so exasperated the officer, that he roughly pushed one of them back, who was using threatening gestures ; on which the other fired his musket at him, but having missed his mark, was shot dead on the spot by the sentry at the gate. This was the signal of an attack from his companions, that was immediately answered by a round of musketry from the troops who were drawn out close to them, which killed several, and spread consternation among the crowds of townspeople who had assembled on the spot. Four of the band, who had presence of mind to spring upon their horses, escaped in different directions out of the town, though followed by cavalry and fired at as they fled. Another portion were made prisoners ; but a third division sought security in a cellar, the first place of refuge which offered itself, and which having only one very low entrance, afforded them a defensible asylum for some time : the depth and darkness of this receptacle made it difficult to attack them with success, for they killed a soldier, and wounded several others who had ventured too near the aperture. Of this last desperate set, four, however, gave themselves up, and made known the number that remained. In order to bring as speedy a termination as possible to the dismay and agitation which this event had spread throughout the city, two of those who had been last taken were sent

in to their companions with their hands tied, to persuade them to surrender, and to inform them that if they persevered in a resistance, which, from the local nature of their retreat, must be unavailing, a straw fire would lighted at the orifice, as the only means of hastening their compliance or destruction. The unfortunate men never returned, and no answer being given, this threat was put into actual execution, and the aperture blocked up with stones. Imagination pictures their situation as most horrible; but its terrors were eluded by the last resource of despair. Two hours after the cellar was entered without opposition, and their lifeless bodies, covered with wounds, indicated the death they had received at each other's hands.

“In about five hours some degree of tranquillity was restored to the city; and it was evident that the feelings of alarm occasioned by this singular event, and even those of aversion and universal reprobation which the excesses of the banditti had excited, now yielded to emotions of compassion, called forth by so terrific and untimely a death. Even the policy which prompted this severe punishment met with comments and constructions by no means favourable to those whose duty it was to inflict it.

“In the evening the shops were re-opened, and I ventured to send my letters of recommendation to the General Commandant of the division, and the Intendente, who both showed me every attention and civility during my stay. But I had with me a document of similar import addressed to a very different character.

“On my leaving Benevento, one of its most respectable inhabitants, fearing I might encounter the Vardarelli troop on their way to head-quarters, gave me a letter of introduction to one of them, which he assured me would be the means of securing me from

all such danger as the existing uncertainty of their projects and movements might render possible if not probable. The robber to whom it was addressed had been employed on a farm of the writer, and retained a friendly and even respectful feeling towards his former master, which had shown itself on several occasions since they had parted. Curiosity led me to inquire whether this person was among the survivors of the dreadful catastrophe of the morning; and having sent to the prison where they were confined, for the purpose of ascertaining the fact, I was answered in the affirmative, and conducted, as I imagined, to the cell which contained the object of my inquiries. It seems that the substance of my message having been conveyed from mouth to mouth, had undergone a material change in its purport; and before I was rendered aware of the misunderstanding, I found myself in a low vaulted room, at the back of the public prisons, and standing opposite to several naked bodies exposed on some straw. One of these was pointed out to me as that of the individual whom I sought.

“The infliction of a sudden and violent death on a robust and active frame is far from producing those effects which the repeated attacks of disease, or the gradual decay of the vital powers, leave impressed in characters so awful or offensive on the human countenance. The setting rays of the same sun which had cast its morning radiance on beings moving in the full energy of existence, now shone on their lifeless but not inexpressive features. The turmoil of passions which had agitated the last dreadful moments of their existence was visibly, though variously depicted, in every face, nor could the expression be mistaken; the sullen brow strongly contracted over the glaring eyeball, the pallid lip curled to a sardonic smile, each bespoke the final agonies of desperate

bravery, ineffectual revenge, or the hopeless struggles of expiring crime.

“The colour of the cheeks was fixed, but not extinct, and nought but the attitude was that of death. They had been stripped of every article, save the reliquaries, or consecrated images, which the lower classes in Italy invariably wear round their neck, and which now rested on the ghastly wounds that disfigured their bodies, some of which were also blackened by smoke. None of these men were above the age of forty, while most of them were considerably younger. It was said that individuals of every nation were to be found in their ranks; but I believe that a Frenchman and an Hungarian were the only two who were not natives of Italy*.”

Thus ended the famous Vardarelli. The following amusing particulars are also from the pen of the gentleman who so vividly represented the scenes of their destruction. Mr. Craven went from Foggia to Cerignola, another town in the plain of Apulia.

“A letter, which I had brought from Foggia to the Syndic, procured me a visit from that gentleman, and an apology for some delay in making it, occasioned by the return of his brother from the adjoining province of Basilicata, where, only a few days before, he had been carried by a party of fourteen brigands. This had happened on the very evening of that day which witnessed the destruction of the Vardarelli, and though the parties had no connexion with each other, the coincidence was remarkable. It seems that this *comitiva* was but lately organized, and had hitherto confined its practices within the boundaries of Basilicata, to which it belonged; but tempted by the reputed wealth of the Syndic of Cerignola, the

* Hon. R. Keppel Craven's Tour through the Southern Provinces of Naples.—Chapters II. and III.

banditti had lain in ambush for a whole night, near a house and farm which he possessed, three miles from the town, and after waiting all the next day, which his brother had spent there, in the act of superintending the rural concerns of the family, they seized upon him and an attendant at dusk, just as they were preparing to go home; and, crossing the Ofanto, which, at no great distance from the spot, divides the two provinces, they forced him to walk thirty miles in the course of that night, to reach the mountain of Melfi. Here they halted among the woody recesses, which afforded them a secure retreat, and detained him, while they sent back his servant with the terms they fixed for his ransom, and powers to negotiate for its payment. The demand which they at first advanced was so exorbitant, that the wretched prisoner, aware of the inability of his relatives to raise a sum so considerable, assured them that they might as well kill him at once as require it. To this they very indignantly replied, that they were not wretches capable of committing murder, and assured him that he need fear no personal injury; although they had, for the sake of expedition and safety, urged the speed of his nocturnal progress by occasional blows, and followed his person with slight, but frequent applications of the well-sharpened points of their stilettoes. They lowered, however, their demands; and, after a few days' negotiations, agreed to liberate him for the sum of twelve hundred ducats*, a hundred yards of velvet for pantaloons, and several dozen of silver buttons and buckles for the same. The difficulty of purchasing these articles, without incurring suspicion, will account for their insertion as part of the ransom. If the reader asks how these treaties are carried into effect, and who the individuals are that

* About 200*l.* At *par*, six ducats, Neapolitan, make a pound sterling.

act as negotiators, I can only say, that the principal sufferers are anxious to conceal the details of transactions forbidden by a law, which humanity and compassion always transgress. It is to be observed, that, except in revenge for treachery and evident breach of faith in the fulfilment of these agreements, the banditti have generally been found true to their word, while few among the unhappy objects of their rapacity have fallen victims to a spirit of wanton ferocity, and they are always restored for much less than the sum originally required. It is scarcely necessary to add, that I allude to this, not in extenuation of so abominable a practice, but merely as a custom which they probably adhere to so punctually, for the sake of inspiring greater confidence in their promises."

DON CIRO, OR THE PRIEST-ROBBER.

THIS extraordinary man, whose atrocities far exceed those of his contemporaries (and sometimes his friends) the Vardarelli, was born in the little Neapolitan town of Grottaglie. His parents, who were in easy circumstances, destined him for the ecclesiastical profession, which he entered very young. Having gone through the routine of a priest's education at the seminario and collegio, he was in due course of time ordained by the Bishop of the diocese, and received the mass. The brothers of Don Ciro, most respectable farmers, and his uncle the Canon Patitaro, neither of whom ever took any part in his crimes, were alive and in the enjoyment of unblemished reputation a very few years ago, and are probably still living.

Don Ciro, even at an early period of life, showed very great talents—qualities indeed that might almost

claim the high epithet of genius ; but unfortunately he possessed also what so frequently accompanies genius, a most ardent and passionate temperament. With a disposition—a resistless impulse to love ever working within him, he was forbidden the indulgence of that most natural and potent of all passions by his sacred profession and his vows. Volumes more extensive than these, devoted to brigands, might be filled with the atrocities and horrors that have resulted from this celibacy of the Catholic clergy ; and it happens rather unfortunately that the Catholic religion should be maintained, and this privation insisted upon, in the hot countries of the south more particularly, where men's passions are infinitely more violent than among the Protestant inhabitants of the more northern parts of Europe. In numerous instances, of course, the rights of nature are asserted at the cost of perjury, and priests contrive to live like other men without exciting open remark or bringing scandal upon the profession. But *Ciro Anicchiarico* was not of an age or in circumstances to have a *nipote in casa*, and unfortunately he became enamoured of a lady his own townswoman. This was the key to all his crimes. His passion was too impetuous to be concealed, and his townfolk talked lightly of him : a young man of the place, a schoolfellow, and once a friend, met with more favour in the eyes of the lady than the priest could hope for. *Ciro* saw evidences of this one day. He rushed out of the house, and, providing himself with a gun, lurked behind a wall until his rival should approach. The young man came, but never went from the fatal spot. *Ciro*, who was even then a good marksman, shot him dead, and slunk away, fancying to escape discovery. Some rumours, however, were soon raised by the *Motolesi*, the family of the priest's victim. *Ciro's* thirst for vengeance was not satisfied with one murder ; he had vowed to exterminate the

whole family of the Motolesi. Their murmured suspicions perhaps hastened their fate ; and, one after the other, every individual of that house, save one, had disappeared from the little town of Grottaglie. (The individual who escaped lived shut up in his house for several years, without ever daring to go out ; and the unhappy being, even fifteen years after the murder of his kindred, thought that a snare was laid for him when people came to tell him of the imprisonment, and shortly after of the death, of his remorseless enemy ; and it was with great difficulty that he was induced to quit his retreat.)

When he had gratified his revenge, and found that the tardy justice of his country was about to proceed against him, he fled from his native town. Whether he became a brigand then, does not appear ; but he shortly after played the part of a hero, for on learning that the Government, ever injudicious and tyrannical, had thrown his innocent brothers into prison, "he flew," he said, "on the wings of fraternal love," to effect their release, and presented himself to the extraordinary judiciary commission of Apulia sitting at Trani. The innocence of his brothers was made evident, and they were released, but all the ingenuity and eloquence of the Abbé (for he had attained that sacerdotal grade) could not save himself. Capital punishment, however, was then rare in the kingdom of Naples ; and, convicted and manifold murderer as he was, he was only sentenced to the galleys for fifteen years. For four years he was confined in the most horrid dungeons, never being sent to the place appointed for his transportation, though he several times petitioned for that removal, which would have enabled him to breathe fresh air at least for a certain number of hours each day. It would be too horrible to reflect on the workings of a mind like his, in darkness and utter

solitude—in a very hell ! from which, as might be expected, he came out a fiend indeed !

At the expiration of the fourth year of his dreadful confinement, he contrived to escape. But whither could he go without friends or money ? The Government of his country had now passed into the hands of the French, who exercised it with more energy than the old Bourbons. But the provinces, as I have already explained, were overrun by desperate men, in whom, for a long time, were confounded the characters of brigands and political partisans. The Abate Ciro, therefore, went and joined one of the most notorious of these bands, which soon acknowledged him as their chief, and grew in numbers and prospered under his guidance and fostering talents. Under other circumstances he might have been an excellent soldier—he turned out a most accomplished bandit. Not one of the band could fire his rifle with so sure an aim, or mount his horse like the priest Don Ciro. In the course of his vagabond and hard life, being obliged to hide for seasons in the most horrible holes of the rocks or depths of the forest, and not unfrequently suffering the want of the merest necessaries for human sustenance, he acquired a strength of constitution, a resoluteness of purpose, and an adroitness and cunning the most remarkable, even among men whose modes of life of necessity confirmed and strengthened the same qualities.

One of his first exploits after escaping from the dungeons of Lecce, was to penetrate with his satellites into one of the first houses of the little town of Martano, where, after having offered violence to the person of its mistress, he murdered her, and all her people, and decamped with a large sum of ready money. This deed was followed up by numerous crimes of the like nature, until what with truth, and

a little natural exaggeration, the amount of delinquencies was most fearful, and nothing was heard of but *Ciro Anacchiarico*. This was so much the case, that some years after, when he thought it expedient to send in a justification of his conduct, he said that "whatever robbery, whatever murder, whatever assassination was committed on the face of the earth, was instantly attributed to the *Abate Anacchiarico*."

The extent of this reputation could not but be dangerous to him—yet he continued, year after year, to elude every pursuit, and to baffle the many hundreds of soldiers that were occasionally sent against him. He was always well mounted. A retreat of thirty or forty miles in a day, was as nothing to him—and even when confidential spies had revealed the place of his concealment but a few hours before, and his pursuers came upon him with the full confidence that they should take him at last, his skill and activity always served him at need, and he escaped. This singular good fortune, or rather talent, of being able to extricate himself from the most imminent dangers, acquired for him, among the people, the valuable reputation of a necromancer, upon whom ordinary means of attack had no power; and *Ciro* becoming aware of this, neglected nothing which could confirm the idea, and increase the sort of spell it produced upon the ignorant, superstitious peasants. The country people, indeed, soon carried their fears so far, that they dared not execrate, or even blame *Don Ciro* in his absence, so firmly were they persuaded that his demon would immediately inform him of it and render them obnoxious to his bloody revenge.

Meanwhile, a robber by profession—an unholy wizard in the imagination of other men—a devil in reality, *Don Ciro* never wholly relinquished his sacerdotal character; on the contrary, he would frequently perform its functions, celebrating the mass and

other solemn rites to the banditti—who were generally found in Italy to have a strong relish for religion, such as it is, and who will send a knife into your bosom while a crucifix and a reliquary repose upon their own. Further to strengthen the anomaly of his position as a priest, he was accustomed to declare the whole Catholic priesthood rogues without faith; and he affected himself a very libertine character, addicting himself in a particular manner to the perusal of indecent French songs, a whole collection of which was once found in his portfolio.

The other bands of banditti, compared with this priest-robber's, were angels of mercy. Yet in the course of perpetrating the most ruthless crimes, Don Ciro would sometimes indulge in whims to which he tried to give an air of generosity.

General D'Ottavio, a Corsican in the service of Murat, had long been pursuing him with a thousand men. One day Ciro, whose audacity was frequently quite romantic, armed at all points, surprised the General, unarmed and alone, walking in his own garden. He discovered himself—pronounced his dreaded name, and remarked, that the life of the General, who sought *his* life, was in his hands. "But," said he, "I will pardon you this time, although I shall cease to be so indulgent if you continue to hunt me about with so much fury!" Thus saying he leaped over the garden wall and disappeared.

When King Ferdinand was restored to his States on the Continental side of the Faro by the great political game of Europe, in which he had been about as neutral as a marker in whist, he recalled, as I have already mentioned, such as had been *fuorusciti* for political opinions. There were many robbers in this number, but Ciro Anacchiarico's crimes were of too deep a dye. Yet this bold villain did not fear to present himself to the public authorities at Lecce, claim-

ing his Majesty's amnesty. The Magistrates gave him a safe-conduct to the city of Bari, where he was to reside, under the eye of the police, for the present. He pretended afterwards that he felt remorse and repentance at this time, and even entertained a serious idea of shutting himself up in the College of the Missionaries, and passing the rest of his days in fasting and prayers. "I was on the point," said he in his justification, "of following up my noble resolution, when the thunderbolt burst upon my head (*allorchè intesi lo scroscio del violentissimo fulmine, che si scagliava sul mio capo*). Ah! let it be permitted me, most respectable Signors, to exclaim this moment with Æneas (*coll' Enea di Virgilio*—the robber had not quite forgotten his classics!)

‘Infandum—jubete vos—renovare dolorem!’

I have not force enough to express to you, how my heart was rent, or the deplorable state which I miserably sank into, when I was secretly informed by a faithful friend, that my arrest was ordered on the cruel accusation of having infringed the royal mandate. I vanished like lightning from Bari; I went to the capital to obtain redress, and to discover once more the black conspiracy against me. All was vain. The hopes I had cherished disappeared; and while perplexed as to the steps I ought to take, the power of my relentless persecutors prevailed. At last I left the capital, and guided only by that fortitude and constancy so necessary in my misfortunes, I betook myself to my old haunts in the solitude of the forests, and recommenced a savage and wretched life."

This was at the end of 1815: towards the termination of the following year, Don Ciro, having well employed the intervening time, and now taking the alarm at the adoption of vigorous measures by the Government to put down the brigands, conceived the bold

idea of uniting all the various bands of robbers and outlaws, of whatever faction or denomination, to oppose the march of the King's troops with all the forces they could muster, and otherwise to assert henceforward one common cause.

The Vardarelli, the most conspicuous of the robbers, were then enjoying the honours of their royal capitulation, and were in the King's pay; but *Ciro* knew there were grounds of fear and dissatisfaction existing among them, and hoped to induce them "to turn out" again. He therefore invited them, with the chiefs of other bands, to a personal conference, in order, in the first place, to treat of the measures to be pursued against *General Church*, who was coming into their provinces at the head of the King's troops: and these worthies had, accordingly, two different interviews, the first at the end of 1816, in a little deserted chapel, where *Don *Ciro** celebrated mass before he began the conference, and the second in the month of March or April 1817, in a farm between *Eramo* and *Gioja*. *Gaetano Vardarelli* differed as to the propriety of a junction. He represented that it would be well to act in concert, but still separately, and that they ought by all means to avoid a general insurrection, of which they might easily become the victims. "As long," said he, "as our bands are not numerous, Government will be deceived, and make war upon us feebly, as it does now; but as soon as we form ourselves into a more important body, it will be forced to send an army against us." It appeared, that the *Vardarelli*, though dissatisfied, were inclined to wait events; and their advice, or non-adhesion, over-set *Don *Ciro**'s grand plan.

But still bolder and more comprehensive was the next project of this extraordinary man. Seeing the country overrun by sects and secret societies, which, under the names of *Carbonari*, &c. aimed at political

changes, differing in quality, but all equal in absurdity, and some of which exercised vengeance too horrible and rites too disgusting or ridiculous to mention,—he fancied that, by placing himself at the head of one of these, he could not only gratify his passion for plunder and revenge, but ultimately erect himself into the chief of a wonderful Republic, whose influences were to be felt, not over Naples or Italy alone, but over the whole extent of Europe, whose monarchs, whether constitutional or absolute, were all to sink under the dagger of his votaries. *Ciro Anacchiarico* does not appear to have created either, but to have united two of these mysterious societies of cut-throats, who had assumed the names, the one of “*I Patrioti Europei*,” (The European Patriots,) the other of “*I Decisi*,” (The Decided or Resolute.) If the affiliation I have heard traced be correct, these sects both rose out of the *Carbonari*; and the moderate and respectable men—and there were many and many thousands such—of that secret society, ought to have paused and shuddered when they saw how easily their conduct might be imitated and perverted, and to what horrors secret societies might be turned. These associations of the “*Patriots*” and the “*Decided*” increased rapidly, from the weakness of the Government in neglecting, at first, to punish the guilty, and from the notorious corruption of the inferior Government officers and lower clergy. It was found that priests were attached to all their camps or ramifications. Besides our robber-priest, *Dón* *Ciro*, whose superior talent and remorseless mode of proceeding soon put him at the head of the whole, the arch-priest *Cirino Cicillo*, of *Cacamola*, *Vergine*, of *Coregliano*, and *Leggeri*, filled important situations in the sect. The arch-priest *Zurlo*, of *Valsano*, particularly distinguished himself, and in his native town, and on Christmas eve,

he renewed a scene of the middle ages,—he celebrated the midnight mass, armed from head to foot!

As soon as these bands (compared to whom the *comitive* of avowed brigands had hitherto been moderate and decorous associations) had acquired some strength, they sent detachments into nearly every town and village in Apulia. Supported by a larger troop in the neighbourhood, they soon became the despotic masters of solitary or insulated places. A horde of twenty or thirty of these ruffians, who pretended a more peculiar inspiration of republicanism and secret-societyship, overran the country, disguised and masked as punchinellos, committing atrocities, in more ways than one, too unnatural and loathsome to bear repeating.

The most horrid crime perpetrated by the priest Don Ciro was under this disguise of the national buffoon. There was a beautiful woman in a remote village, of whom he had become passionately enamoured (after his fashion), but whom neither his presents, his promises, nor his threats, could seduce. It was carnival time, and on a certain evening, she and her relations and friends were enjoying the pleasures of a dance and a feast. Don Ciro, and several of his more desperate adherents, came to the house, disguised as Punchinellos. At that season of madness, every house, where an entertainment is going on, is open, and as all the neighbourhood are masking and mumming, it is of course not easy, nor is it attempted, to distinguish who the thronging guests may be. Don Ciro proved himself an acceptable one by bringing a plentiful supply of excellent wine, in which he and his comrades pledged the company, and drank *brindisis*, or rhymed toasts, of admirable facetiousness.

They then joined the dance, the disguised priest

selecting the happy and unsuspecting object of his passion, for his partner. After numerous tarentellas, which, of all the dances I have seen, are the most calculated to irritate voluptuousness, the party sat down to an abundant supper, the punch-robber-priest still occupying the ear of the beautiful *paesana*, and only detaching his attention from her to make the party drink. As for himself, he merely touched the wine with his lips, and so remained perfectly sober, whilst all the rest of the men were fast approaching intoxication.

At what he considered an opportune moment, he quitted his punchinello squeak, resumed his natural voice, made himself known to the woman, and again pleaded his passion. The poor creature was as averse as ever. He then rose, beckoned to his companions, and wishing the festive party good night, left the house—which, in half an hour, was wrapped in flames. And so well laid were the robber's matches, and so drunk and stupified the revelling peasants, whose wine had been drugged, that they all perished in the conflagration. Don Ciro himself, when in prison, and in the power of General Church, from which he knew there was no escape, related this atrocious exploit, nor did the near prospect of death induce him to make a single expression of remorse. He dwelt on the beauty of his victim, and his still existing mortification at his not having obtained her love, boasting that he had not often been so disappointed.

In places where open force could not be employed, the most daring disciples were sent in secrecy to watch the moment to execute the sentences of death pronounced in the mysterious society. In this manner, the sectary Perone plunged his knife into the bowels of an old man of seventy—the respectable Dell' Aglio, of Francavilla, and afterwards massacred his wife and servant, having introduced himself into their house,

under pretence of delivering a letter ; and in the same manner, the Justice of Peace of Luogo Rotondo and his wife were assassinated in their own garden.

These bloody sectaries would not suffer neutrality : it was absolutely necessary to join them, or to live exposed to their vengeance, which appeared to be inevitable. The society would pass a secret sentence of death, and proceed at once to its execution, or, if necessary, an individual would take the office upon himself, and wait days and nights, until he could strike the blow. The Old Man of the Mountains seemed risen from the grave—the Apulian sectaries were as sanguinary and unerring as his tremendous satellites had been.

They did not invite the support of the rich proprietors and persons of distinction, against whom their hostilities were to be directed ; but they unhappily found partisans among the less wealthy ; and some few of the inferior gentry, who were jealous of the high nobility, also joining them. These men would probably have blushed at the idea of becoming brigands, yet could there be a more detestable species of brigandage, than what was revealed to them by Don Ciro and his associates? Even allowing that parts of his plan were not divulged to the more respectable of his sectaries, (who, in the long-run, must have been the victims of the more villanous,) yet what sympathy can be inspired by the political aspirations of men who could ally themselves with known robbers and murderers, like Anicchiarico and his gang? The Government, instead of summoning the opulent proprietors to its assistance, offended and disgusted them by distrust. A meeting at the fair of Galantina, to deliberate on the means of checking the disorders, was cried down, and treated at Naples as a revolutionary proceeding. In extenuation, however, of this seeming imprudence of Government it

must be mentioned, that many of these gentlemen or noblemen, resident on their estates in the provinces, were themselves members of secret societies, which had all a political scope; they were not *Patrioti Europei*, or *Decisi*, but they were *Carbonari*:—this I, being in the country, both before and after the events under discussion, know very well—the Neapolitan Government also knew it, and they could hardly draw a line between the sects, the objects of all of which, as already mentioned, were revolutionary, and they feared all the secret societies alike. In the winter of 1816-17, I saw, partly accidentally, and partly through circumstances, which I did not seek, but which it would be dishonourable to disclose, a re-union of these gentlemen. Some were provincial nobility, some noblemen from Naples, who only occasionally resided on their estates, some were substantial farmers. The hour of rendezvous was midnight—the house selected a solitary one, and the members of the club came singly, or in parties of two or three each, on horseback, and without any attendants. This appearance of mystery and night-plotting, though sufficiently romantic, did not captivate me much, and, young as I was, I could not help feeling that the outward and visible showing of these regenerators or reformers was against them. As one of the uninitiated, I was not admitted to their deliberations; but I was informed that they all tended to the establishment of a constitutional government in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

When the *Decisi* became so formidable, these gentlemen, however, showed the purity of their intentions, by aiding the Government to their utmost, as soon as more energy was shown, and by cooperating with General Church, with whom many individuals of this class served both as officers and private volunteers.

But at the same time, General Pastore, Commandant of these provinces, and the Marquis Pre-dicatella, Intendant of Lecce, inflamed party spirit by imitating the system of Canosa*, and setting up private societies to work against private societies: the national guard, under their orders, suffered itself to be partly seduced by the Patrioti and Decisi sectaries, and a number of soldiers and some officers of the Crown battalion of reserve, were similarly corrupted.

The number of these daring sectaries had arrived at its greatest height in the month of December, 1817, or of January 1818. At this period they were estimated at 20,000 men! The mass of them lived at home, in apparent tranquillity, on the produce of their professions; but they were not the less active in committing unheard-of crimes, as their detection was the more difficult. Persons have been known, when in the power, and under the daggers, of these ruffians, to sign contracts for the sale of their houses or lands, the objects of the cupidity of these republicans; the contracts were executed in all the forms of the law, and acknowledgements were given by the unfortunate owners for sums which they had never received.

The sittings of these societies were, at first, in the night, like the more respectable re-union I have men-

* The life of this mad partisan and plotter, the Prince of Canosa, would be as amusing as that of any conspirator or brigand-chief. He was the most fanatic of royalists, and fancied he could put down the Carbonari, or ultra-liberals, by means of the society of the Caldarari, or ultra-Bourbonists. Blood and plunder were nothing in his eyes, provided they worked for the King and the Holy Faith. Yet he was a conscientious man, thoroughly convinced of the sacredness of his calling—a poet with considerable satirical power—gentlemanly, and tolerably amiable in private society, and, like the ex-Dey of Algiers, very fond of clocks and watches.

tioned, and were carefully guarded by sentinels; their military exercises took place in solitary houses, or suppressed and deserted convents; but, taking courage by degrees, they were afterwards seen performing their evolutions by day and in the open air. Most of them had fire-arms: all had poniards. They also began to organize a corps of cavalry. (On the day appointed for their great revolution, our hero, Don Ciro, had engaged to furnish horses for two hundred armed conspirators of Francavilla, who were to repair, on the 27th February, 1818, to a certain place near S. Marzano. It appeared afterwards, that the engagement was kept on neither side, for, in the very prison of Francavilla, Ciro and some conspirators of that town mutually reproached each other with having betrayed the good cause, by neglecting this agreement.)

The patent of this society sufficiently explained its objects. It was an oblong, square paper, or parchment. Two of the angles were ornamented with a skull, over one of which was inscribed "Sadness," and the word "Death" over the other. The opposite angles had cross-bones, with the inscriptions "Terror" and "Mourning." On the top of the patent were the fasces and the cap of liberty, planted upon a death's head, and supported by two axes. At the bottom was a thunderbolt darting from a cloud, and shivering the royal crowns and the papal tiara. Stripes of yellow, red, and blue, the tri-colour of the society, surrounded the patent. The words of the patent were these:

"The Salentine* Decision.
Health.

N^o. — Grand Masons.

"The Decision of Jupiter the Thunderer hopes to

* The Salentine—the ancient classical name of this district of Italy, was also that destined for their imaginary Republic, which they called "A Link of the European Republic."

make war against the tyrants of the Universe, &c.” (*These words, of which only the initials were given, were written in blood, as were several other parts of the document.*)

“The mortal — is a Brother Decided. N^o. —, belonging to the Decision of Jupiter the Thunderer, spread over the face of the earth, by his decision, has had the pleasure of belonging to this Salentine Republican Decision. We invite, therefore, all Philanthropic Societies to lend their strong arm to the same, and to assist him in his wants, he having come to the Decision, that he will obtain Liberty or Death. Dated this day, the — of —, &c.”

Here followed three signatures written in blood.

1st. Of the Grand Master, with four points after it, which indicated his power of passing sentence of death*.

2nd. Of the Second Decided.

3rd. Of the Registrar of the Dead, whose functions did not relate to the deceased members of the society, but to the victims they immolated, and of whom they kept a register apart, on the margin of which were found blasphemies and most infernal projects.

The excesses of such a society, directed by such a

* They slaughtered with method and solemnity, or, at least, they were enjoined so to do by their institutions. As soon as the sectaries employed on this service found it convenient to effect their purpose, at the signal of the first blast of a trumpet, they unsheathed their daggers; they aimed them at their victim at the second blast; at the third they gradually approached their weapons to his breast; and at the fourth, “with real enthusiasm,” to use their cannibal language, they plunged them into his body! These four blasts were symbolized by the four dots after the Grand Master’s name. When the Decisi wrote to any one, not of the order, to extort contributions, or to command him to do anything—if these four points were on the paper, it was known that the person they addressed was condemned to death, in case of disobedience. If the points were not inserted, he was threatened with milder punishment, such as laying waste his fields, or burning his house.

man or monster, as *Ciro Anicchiarico*, may be easily conceived. But they were now drawing to their close.

General Church, armed with the Royal Alter-Ego, or with full and unlimited power, was sent into these distracted provinces, where his energetic and prudent conduct cannot be too much praised. He crossed the river *Ofanto* in the Apulian plain, with 1200 men, chiefly of the foreign regiments in the Neapolitan service, formed by himself, (among them were some companies of cavalry.) He could depend upon this force, which was, for the greater part, composed of Germans, Swiss, Moreotes, and Albanians. The soldiery already in the country were only to be depended upon, after they had witnessed the firm determination with which the General set about his duty, and after the factious individuals, contaminated by the sectaries, had been weeded out. The same was the case with the militia.

Encouraged by the example set them by the Dukes of *San Cesareo* and *Monte Jasi*, and others of the nobility and wealthy proprietors, several individuals, even of the lowest class, furnished information concerning *Don Ciro* and his sectaries, and joined, heart and hand, in the measures for their extermination. The fear of not being supported had hitherto prevented these honest men from acting; but still the greater part of the inferior order were shy and silent, maintaining a line of conduct which indicated that they would not hesitate to declare for the sectaries, if the latter should succeed against General Church. This was particularly observed in the neighbourhood of *Taranto*, at *Grottaglie*, *San Marzano*, *Martina*, and *Francavilla*, the usual haunts of *Don Ciro Anicchiarico* and his friends. When General Church first visited these places, the inhabitants looked on in gloomy silence, and no person saluted him; a poor old monk was the only person who bowed to him.

The bandits and the banished (*fuorusciti* and *fuorbanditi*,) were summoned for the last time before the Royal Commission at Lecce. Don *Ciro* sent in his justification, (a most remarkable composition, with considerable eloquence and ingenuity, and more impudence than can enter our conceptions *;) but, knowing his pardon to be hopeless, instead of presenting himself in person, he prepared to defend himself by his sectaries and arms.

General Church then made his military dispositions. He divided his troops into moveable columns, and placed garrisons upon some points where they were absolutely required, either from their commanding the vast plains of the country, or because they were strong enough to serve as places of retreat for the brigands. The moveable columns all operated towards a common centre, by gradually contracting the circle which embraced the towns of *Grottaglie*, *San Marzano*, and *Francavilla*. Other columns of reserve accompanied the General, who proceeded, with the rapidity of lightning, wherever the spies had traces of *Ciro Anicchiarico*.

At first, confident in his resources, material and moral, the brigand-priest set a price on the head of our bold countryman, but the General's proceedings

* He not only pleaded innocent of all the crimes imputed to him, but laid claim to the gratitude of his country, which, he said, *he had cleared of brigands*. "I can say with truth," continues the unblushing villain, "that the roads through the *Apennines* are now free, the traveller journeys without dread, the farm-houses are re-opened, and the shepherd sings while he leads his peaceful flock to pasture!" "Ah, most gentle Signors, why will you then drive me to desperation, and to crimes which my heart abhors? Why seek the total ruin of a man, of an honest citizen, of a *Priest*, of a faithful friend to public order? Nothing but calumny, &c." "Spare me for pity's sake! and lend assistance to one whose life is past in the gloomy forest and the loathsomeness of the cavern."—Justification of the *Abbè* *Ciro Anicchiarico*, dated 6th November, 1817.

soon undeceived him, and he was heard to murmur, while biting his thumb in token of rage and disappointment, "this is a different sort of man from those they have hitherto sent against me! I have fooled many a General—French, Italian, and Neapolitan, but this one will end by making a fool of me!"

He began to perceive that his resources became day by day weaker and weaker; his credit with the people of the country was no longer what it had been; his *préstitige* was eclipsed to their eyes, and he had to dread that those who were still faithful to him, would soon fall from his side. If he could, he would then have escaped from the country which had so long trembled at his name. He privately reached the port of Brindisi, where he attempted to embark; but the captain of the vessel recognized him, and demanded 2000 ducats as the price of his safety; not having them about him to give, he wrote to his friends, who refused to advance the sum.

Pressed and surrounded more and more closely, pent in the arena, tied to the stake, Don Ciro resolved to risk a general rising of such of his allies as continued desperate, and a pitched battle with the royal troops. He fixed the 27th of February, 1818, for this purpose, and appointed the place of rendezvous under the walls of San Marzano, but his final catastrophe preceded that date!

San Marzano, an Albanian colony, is a miserable little town, containing from 900 to 1000 inhabitants, situated some miles distant from the road between Manduria and Taranto. It is admirably calculated for a defensive position, the rocky hill on which the town is built, and which is planted with olives, is surrounded and intersected by garden walls; it is quite insulated, and extends from east to west. The view from the terrace of the baronial castle is magnificent. From this spot the town of Oria and the towers of

Francavilla are discerned, and in another direction Monte Asole and Grottaglie.

It was from Grottaglie that *Ciro Anicchiarico* set out on the 25th of January, 1818, with forty horsemen and ten foot. At two o'clock in the afternoon he fell in with a detachment of General Church's cavalry, commanded by Captain Montorj, who charged him, and drove him as far as *Neviera*, a farm at the foot of the hill of *San Marzano*. *Ciro* there made a short stand, and then retreated up to the town itself in tolerable good order.

Captain Montorj followed and attempted to enter by the steep and narrow path which wound up to the town; but *Ciro* and his adherents of *San Marzano* repulsed him. The officer then turned the hill in order to scale it on the side of *Manduria*, but there too he was received by a shower of balls. He observed, however, that these were the same men who had repulsed him in the former attempt and had followed his movements, and hence concluded they were not sufficiently numerous to defend all the points at once, and that he should gain his object by deceiving them. Concealing himself behind one of the garden walls, he drew the robbers' attention by firing a carbine or two in that direction, and then he suddenly appeared in the opposite direction followed by most of his men. The stratagem succeeded: Montorj entered *San Marzano*, and the panic-struck followers of *Ciro* dispersed. The great object was to secure *Ciro*; but he was not to be found: he had made another (perhaps the hundredth) of his wonderful escapes, and was safe in the open country before the infantry of a moveable column arrived, which it did immediately after his flight from the town.

An instant census was taken of *San Marzano*, the mayor of which suggested to Major *Bianchi*, the commander of the column, a method of discovering the

delinquents. Every house was searched, and the guilty were recognized by the smell or the blackness of their hands, a proof of their having recently handled fire arms and powder. Vito Serio, the brothers Francesco and Angelo Vito Lecce, Raffaele Zacharia and Pietro Barbuzzi, were arrested, and all executed on the 3rd of February at Francavilla*. Major Bianchi also took the Black Standard, and the insignia and decorations of Don Ciro, which General Church forwarded to Naples, where they were presented to the King by Prince Nugent, the Captain-General.

Major Bianchi, following up his advantages, proceeded the next day to Francavilla. Here he found the inhabitants in the greatest fermentation, determined to break open the prisons and release those confined in them. Having ascertained who were the ringleaders, he lost not a moment in causing them to be seized in their houses. His gens-d'armes patrolled the streets with orders to lay hands on every individual they might meet bearing arms. He thus terrified the towns-people and quelled the tumult.

General Church then arrived in person; the troops concentrated on Francavilla, where a military commission was established to try the outlaws. Don Ciro had now been missing for six or seven days; not a word had been heard of him since his escape from San Marzano, but the General fancying he could not be far off, and that he was still in intimate correspondence with some individuals in that town, threatened it with plunder and destruction, unless its inhabitants enabled him to secure the person of the robber-priest within eight days. Trembling for their houses and property, the militia of San Marzano then undertook to pur-

* Their heads were placed in front of the church of San Marzano. This church was blown down by a hurricane some months after, and the heads were buried beneath its ruins.

sue Don Ciro, and on the 6th of February they beset him in the *masseria* (or farm-house) of Scaserba, not above ten miles from General Church's quarters at Francavilla.

The *masserie* in Apulia and the provinces of Bari, Otranto, and Taranto, are all built on the same plan, and are very capable of defence. The word is not rendered by "farm house," which gives but an inadequate idea of the *masseria*. They date from the period when the incursions of the Turks and Pirates were apprehended, and when the country people shut themselves up in their strongholds with their cattle and most valuable effects, in order to secure themselves from attack. A square wall of enclosure, sufficiently high and solid, generally surrounds the dwelling-house, built against one side, and containing three or four large habitable rooms, and sometimes a small chapel. The vast stables, granaries, and out-houses, within the walls, form a right-angle with this dwelling-house, but without touching it. In the midst of the enclosure, at some distance from the surrounding walls, rises a round or square tower of two stories, standing quite alone. The ascent to the upper story is either by stone steps, inserted in the tower, by a draw-bridge, or by a ladder easily drawn up into the tower. This description will enable the reader to understand how Don Ciro could make so long a resistance in the *masseria* of Scaserba.

He had arrived at this lonely place with some of his comrades worn out with fatigue, and had thought he could venture to repose himself there for a few hours. It was said that he had previously provided Scaserba and many other lonely *masserie* of the district with arms, ammunition, and some provisions. He was surprised at the sudden and hostile apparition of the militia of San Marzano, but not at all alarmed, making sure he could cut his way through them

whenever he chose. Had he rushed out at once, he might have done so. He coolly stayed where he was, and let them form before the gate of the masseria. So strong was his spell on the minds of these men, that for a long time they hesitated to approach within range of his never-erring musket—the first that did so, he shot dead from the outer walls. This delay, however, cost him dear. The militia of San Marzano, though not brave, were this time in earnest, and having sent information to Lieutenant Fonsmorte, stationed at the “Castelli,” a position between Grottaglie and Francavilla, that officer hastened to the spot with forty men of regular troops. As this force came in sight on the edge of the plain, Don Ciro bit his thumb until it bled, for he understood that a vigorous attack was to be made, and retreat was now hopeless. He soon, however, recovered his presence of mind, and locking up the poor people of the masseria in the straw magazine, and putting the key in his pocket, he retired with his desperate followers to the tower. Having ascended to the upper story, they drew in the ladder after them, and proceeded to load all their guns, of which they had a good number.

It was now evening; the darkness of night soon succeeded the brief twilight of the south. That night must have been a sleepless one for Don Ciro, though no attempt was made at storming his stronghold. The morning dawn, however, afforded him no comfort, for Captain Corsi had arrived from Francavilla with a detachment of gens-d’armes, and soon after Major Bianchi came to the field with other reinforcements.

The siege of Scaserba was now formed by one hundred and thirty-two soldiers; the militia, on whom little dependence was placed, being stationed in the second line, and at some distance.

Don Ciro vigorously defended the outer walls and the approaches to his tower from sun-rise to sun-set.

In the night he attempted to escape, but the neighing of horses made him suspect that some cavalry had arrived, whose pursuit it would be impossible to elude, and he saw piquets all round the masseria. He therefore retired, after having killed, with a pistol-shot, a voltigeur stationed under the wall he had attempted to scale. He again shut himself up in his tower, and employed himself all night in making cartridges. An afternoon, two nights, and a whole day, had been spent, and Don Ciro was still master of the whole enclosure, and the outer walls of the masseria. At day-break, the besiegers tried to burst open the strong wooden gate of the outer wall: Ciro and his men creeping from the tower and under the wall by the gate, repulsed the assailants, killing five and wounding fourteen of the soldiers. A barrel of oil was then rolled to the gate, in order to burn it. The first man who set fire to it was shot through the heart. But its flames communicated to the door, which was soon accessible, and Don Ciro was obliged to retreat to his tower. How long he might have kept Major Bianchi at bay, had not a piece of artillery arrived, and had he not forgotten an important part of provision for a siege, is uncertain; but as the day advanced a four-pounder was brought to the spot, and pointed against the roof of the tower. This little piece produced great effect. The tiles and bricks which fell, drove Don Ciro from the upper to the lower story of the tower. The assailants, satisfied with the effects produced by the four-pounder, would not approach the tower; he had nothing to do in the way of firing at them, to keep up his spirits: at the same time, and in this horrid state of inactivity or passiveness, he was tormented with a burning thirst, for he had forgotten to provide himself with water—and he never could drink wine.

At length, after some deliberations with his com-

panions, he demanded to speak with General Church, who he believed was in the neighbourhood; then to the Duke of Monte Jasi (he seems to have had the ancient knights' anxiety, to surrender to none save people of distinction); but that nobleman being also absent, he condescended to capitulate with Major Bianchi. On their approach, he addressed the besiegers, and threw them some bread. Major Bianchi assured him that he should not be maltreated by the soldiery, of whom he had killed and wounded so many. He then lowered the ladder, descended from the tower, and presented himself to the major and his troops, with the words "Eccomi, Don Ciro,"—Here am I, Don Ciro!

His comrades then followed him. And how many were these desperate men, who had so long defended themselves against such a force! They were only three—Vito di Cesare, Giovanni Palmieri, and Michele Cuppoli.

Their hands, their faces, their dress, were horribly begrimed by gunpowder and smoke, but there was no appearance of wounds on their persons, and their countenances, particularly that of their daring leader, were firm and resolute in the extreme. The first thing Don Ciro did after surrendering himself to the soldiers was, to beg them to give him water to quench his consuming thirst. He then delivered the key and desired them to liberate the people of the maseria, who had been locked up all this while in the straw magazine. He declared that they were innocent, and as they came out of their place of confinement he distributed money among them. He patiently suffered himself to be searched and bound. Some poison was found upon him, which he said he would have taken in the tower had not his companions prevented him.

The besiegers and their captives now marched off

for Francavilla. Don Ciro conversed quietly enough all the way with Major Bianchi, to whom he related the principal circumstances of his most extraordinary life.

In prison he was equally calm. He only appeared to be interested for the fate of some of his partisans, or *decisi*: he declared that they had been compelled by his threats and their own fears to do whatever they had done, and he intreated that they might not be persecuted.

On being placed before the Council of War, presided by Lieutenant-Colonel Guarini, he addressed a speech to that officer, mistaking him for General Church. Among other strong arguments he used, was this:—

“On the day that you, General, with the Duke of San Cesareo and only a few horsemen, reconnoitred Grottaglie, I was there, with several of mine, concealed behind a ruined wall, close by the gate where you entered. I covered you with my rifle, and I never missed my aim at ten times that distance! Had not the feelings of mercy prevailed in my bosom, General, instead of being here to judge me, you would have been in your grave. Think of this, Signor General, and let me meet with the mercy I have shown.”

On being informed of his mistake, he insisted on seeing General Church; when this was refused him, he quietly resigned himself to his fate, drily saying, “*Ho capito*,” (I understand). He did not pronounce another word.

After sentence of death was passed, a missionary introduced himself, and offered him the consolations of religion. Don Ciro answered him with a smile, “*Lasciate queste chiacchiere; siamo dell’ istessa professione; non ci burliamo fra noi!*” (Let us leave alone all this stuff and prating! we are of the same trade—don’t let us laugh at one another!)

On being asked by Captain Montorj, reporter of the military commission which condemned him, how many persons he had killed with his own hand, he carelessly answered, "E chi lo sa? saranno tra sessanta e settanta!" (Who can tell?—they may be between sixty and seventy*.)

As he was led to execution, he recognized Lieutenant Fonsmorte, the officer who had been the first to arrive at the masseria of Scaserba with his regular troops. Don Ciro had admired his readiness and courage, and said to him, "Se io fosse Re, vi farei Capitano!" (If I were a king, I would make you a captain.)

The streets of Francavilla, through which he passed, were filled with people; even the house-tops were crowded with spectators. They all preserved a gloomy silence.

On his arrival at the place of execution, Don Ciro walked with a firm step to his fatal post. He wished to be shot standing—but they ordered him to kneel. He did so, presenting his breast to the soldiers. He was then told that malefactors, like himself, were always shot with their backs to the soldiers; "E tutto uno," (it is all the same) he replied with a smile, and then he turned his back. As he did so, he advised a priest, who persisted in remaining near to him, to withdraw, "for," said he, "these fellows are not all such good shots as I have been—they may hit you!"

He spoke no more—the signal was given—the soldiers fired at the kneeling Priest-robber. Twenty-one balls took effect—four in the head! Yet he still breathed and muttered in his throat; it required a twenty-second shot to put an end to him! This fact

* One of his companions, Occhiolupo, (Wolf-eye, a fine name for a robber!) confessed to seventeen; the two brothers, Francesco and Vito Serio, to twenty-three; so that these four ruffians alone had assassinated upwards of a hundred!

was confirmed by all the officers and soldiers present at his execution. The people, who had always attributed supernatural powers to him, were confirmed in their belief by his tenaciousness of life, which was, indeed, little short of miraculous. "As soon as we perceived," said one of the soldiers very seriously, "that Don Ciro was enchanted, we loaded his own musket with a silver ball, and this destroyed the spell*."

Thus fell, in 1818, after fifteen years of a most lawless life, dating from his jealousy and first murder, Don Ciro Anicchiarico, of whom little else remains to be said, save that his countenance had nothing at all repulsive about it, but was, on the contrary, rather mild and agreeable; that he was master of a verbose but most persuasive eloquence, though pedantic in his style and over-addicted to classical allusions and inflated phrases—the general defects of his countrymen, the Neapolitans.

The reader who has seen the destruction of their head, may feel some curiosity as to what befel the body of the sanguinary sect the "Decisi."

The day after the death of Don Ciro, ten of the most criminal among them were led through the streets of Francavilla to execution: two or three of them recognised at the windows the fathers, the sons, the widows, or relatives of those they had assassinated by the decision of their horrid secret tribunal, and

* This superstition is very general. The Greeks and Turks have it: and in Scotland it is still believed among the people that Viscount Dundee, better known by the name of Graham of Claverhouse, was invulnerable to all ordinary weapons and balls, and that his death, at the battle of Killcrankie, was owing to the presence of mind of a young officer, who, finding himself within pistol-shot of the charmed man, twisted a silver button off his jacket, with which he loaded his piece, and shot the Viscount through the heart.

asked pardon of them. But these were the only men among them who ever expressed the least feeling of repentance. All the others were so hardened and fanatical, that they gloried in, rather than regretted their crimes, and died with a ferocious indifference. Among their number were the Grand Master, the Second Decided, and the Registrar of the Dead—the three dignitaries of the Order.

The military tribunal afterwards brought about two hundred and twenty-seven persons to trial. Nearly half of these having been guilty of murder and robbery by force of arms, were condemned to capital punishment, and their heads were exposed near the places of their residence, or in the scenes of their crimes.

The death of Don Ciro and his principal accomplices happily put a stop to disturbances, and to that atrocious system which had threatened to take a wider range. In a short time peace was restored to the desolated provinces. General Church used his absolute power with admirable discretion. Even his enemies soon admired, and then loved him. His established principle was, to listen to, or receive no accusations against political opinions, or connexions with secret societies; but he punished crimes and deeds of violence with severity. He caused the accused to be tried without delay; hunted out vagrants; and dismissed from their situations all such government officers as could not be depended upon. Instead of seizing the people's arms without an equivalent, he caused their full value to be paid. He threatened with death such artisans as should dare to manufacture prohibited arms. He exhorted the confessors to endeavour to obtain possession of the poniards, or to oblige the penitents to throw them into deep wells. The city of Lecce, grateful for the blessings of restored tranquillity, voted a statue to the King, and a

sword of honour to General Church, with the freedom of the city. And finally, in April, 1819, the following consoling circular was issued by the Neapolitan Government.

“The reign of the assassins being at an end, and all the provinces tranquillized, it is resolved, in order to extinguish their memory, that the heads of the malefactors executed in pursuance of the sentences of the military commission, and which are exposed under the church towers, and other parts of the towns, shall be taken down and interred, and that the places where they were exposed shall be entirely cleaned and white-washed. This letter shall be read by the arch-priests in all the churches.”

This narrative is chiefly taken from a very curious, but, I believe, little known volume on the Carbonari, written by the late Baron Bertholdi, though published anonymously in London. He was at great pains to conceal his authorship; but he is dead, and I can say confidently on grounds I need not here explain, (though I may hint that one very sufficient one is, he was the only foreigner who possessed the full knowledge of that mystical society,) that he was the author of the work which was written in French, and done into English by a friend.

The Baron Bertholdi, as a man, was more curious and mysterious than his book. He was Resident of his Prussian Majesty at Rome, where he was well known for his knowledge and encouragement of the Fine Arts, and by his mansion, in which he had employed some German students, of high genius, to paint frescoes, that almost rivalled some of the works in the same style of the old Italian masters. He had been a Jew in faith, and continued one in manner and appearance, though he had adopted the

Lutheran religion.—This conversion was the subject of a witticism among the Romans, who said there was good hope for him, as he had already changed his quarters in hell—where Jews are somewhat worse off than heretics and schismatics. He was a great deal at Naples, where he courted the society of the English, particularly that of a distinguished diplomatist, of whom the Neapolitans called him the jackal, from his being so continually with him.

He was the most busy, prying little man I ever knew—indeed, a thorough political Paul Pry. It was said he knew every thing that was passing; and well he might, for he always made his appearance in times of trouble and intrigue, and was to be seen everywhere, almost at the same time, and mixing with men of all parties. I once had positively a nervous dread of him, for go where I would, I was sure to see his sinister countenance and inquisitorial eye. The Neapolitans generally, perhaps from no better proofs than his ill-omened appearance, held him as an arch-enemy to the liberal institutions, which they bungled so sadly; and when, some years after their revolution, they heard of his death, they could scarcely credit the welcome news, for they had set down the Baron Bertholdi as “The Wandering Jew.”

I lack the ample knowledge of the mysterious subject, that would enable me to give an opinion as to the entire correctness of his account of the Carbonari society; but I can answer, that the portion of his volume which contains the adventures of *Ciro Anicchiarico*, marvellous as it at times may appear, is perfectly correct, for I was in the country at the time, knew several of the actors in those sanguinary scenes, and heard the stories from their lips. Well might Byron say, “Truth is stranger than fiction!” Where is the writer of romance that would feign such a life as that of this priest-robber?

ROMAN BANDITTI.

It has been my object throughout this work to collect my materials, as far as possible, from eye-witnesses of the deeds of the brigands, or persons who were near their haunts and the scenes of their exploits, and derived their information at the immediate source. To no one can I be more indebted than to our own gentle countrywoman, Maria Graham, from whom the following account is taken; nor can I preface the scenes and adventures to which she has given such animation and reality, better than by the words of her own introduction.

“These notices of the banditti might have been more full and more romantic, but the writer scrupulously rejected all accounts of them upon the truth of which she could not rely, thinking it better to give one authentic fact, than twenty doubtful, though more interesting, tales. The banditti, or fuorusciti of Italy, are what the forest outlaws of England were in the days of Robin Hood. They are not of the poorest or vilest of the inhabitants. They generally possess a little field and a house, whither they retire at certain seasons, and only take the field when the hopes of plunder allure them, or the fear of a stronger arm drives them to the woods and rocks. They live under various chiefs, who, while their reign lasts, are absolute; but as they are freely chosen, they are as freely deposed, or sometimes murdered, if they offend their subjects. To be admitted into the ranks of the regular banditti, a severe apprenticeship to all kinds of hardships is required. The address and energy displayed by these men, under a better Government, might conduce to the happiest effects. But here the fire burns not to warm, but to destroy.”

The great heat of Rome during the summer of 1819, drove the fair author, her husband, and Mr. Eastlake the distinguished painter, whose admirable pictures of the Italian banditti are so generally known and admired, to seek a cooler retreat in some of the mountains in the neighbourhood of the ancient capital of the world.

“Accident,” says the fair author, “determined in favour of the little town of Poli*, between Tivoli and Palestrina; and as circumstances occurred while we were there of some interest, a sort of journal was kept of everything material. During the last few days of our stay at Poli, the interest we had taken in the country-people about us was superseded by one to which a considerable degree of danger was joined. The banditti who had long infested the road between Rome and Naples, having been driven from their towns of Sonino, Frusinone†, and Ferentino, partly by the Pope’s edict, and partly by the march of a body of two thousand of his Holiness’s troops against them, had fled up the country and taken refuge in the wilds which border that great valley of the Apennines, formed by the course of the Anio, and separating the Marsian hills from those on whose edge Tivoli and Palestrina are situated. The highest point of this last ridge is the rock of Guadagnola, two hours’ walk from Poli. There one company of the banditti stationed itself, and thence made excursions to our very gates.

* Poli is twenty-six miles to the east of Rome. The road to it from the Porta Maggiore follows the ancient Sabine or Prenestine way across the Campagna, till it becomes impassable.

† All these are ancient places that witnessed, instead of the deeds of robbers, the heroic achievements of Coriolanus! Sonino was the ancient Sumnino; Frusinone, Frusino; Ferentino, Ferentinum, (at which place are some of the finest specimens of the walls, called by some writers Cyclopians.) All three were towns of the Volsci.

“The number of the inhabitants of Poli does not exceed one thousand three hundred; they are a very quiet simple people. The town stands on a narrow ridge of dark rock, between two mountain rivulets. The stone it is built of is so like the rock, that it looks as if it had grown out of it; and embosomed in thick woods, and overtopped by mountains, it shows like a mountain-eagle’s nest as one approaches it. It was a place of great consequence when the Conti, Dukes of Poli, had under their dominion upwards of forty townships, and boasted of the Cardinals, the Princes, and the Popes of their house! Their importance in the civil wars of Italy has given them a place in each of the three divisions of the *Divina Commedia* of Dante: but the title of the Dukes of Poli is extinct, and their large possessions have devolved to other noble families.”

The scenery around Poli, which is very accurately and strikingly described by our fair countrywoman, is of the most picturesque or romantic character, and no reader can well follow her, in her delightful excursions, through the wild wood, or the lonely valley, or to the mountain’s top, where, as the sun is setting over the wide campagna, she pauses to read from Schiller the “*Robber Moor’s Soliloquy*,” without wishing to be with her, though real and dreadful banditti were always close at hand.

“We have heard,” writes she, a few days after her arrival, “from some peasants bringing their corn to be ground at the mills near Poli, that the robberies lately committed on the road between Rome and Naples, had determined Government to raze to the ground the town of Sonino, which had opened its gates to the banditti, and had, in fact, long been their head-quarters. Indeed, the first report was, that the town had actually been battered down, and all the inhabitants put to death in the night. The peasants

who gave this evidently exaggerated account, were of opinion that the men most certainly have been absent from the town, or they would never have suffered it to be so surprised; and, in that case, they foretold the most dreadful consequences to whoever should fall into their hands, by way of reprisal for the murder of their wives and children. At any rate, whether Sonnino were destroyed or not, whether the brigands, who would certainly leave the towns as soon as they heard the severe proclamation issued against them, would direct their steps, was matter of serious and anxious conjecture. Two years ago, on a similar occasion, the noted Di Cesaris, who was shot in the spring of 1818 near Terracina, led his followers up to these hills, and for nearly two months they subsisted on the spoil of the neighbouring townships. On such expeditions the banditti are always aided by the shepherds and goatherds, a race of men apt for their purposes, as their half-savage life, while it gives them enough intercourse with the towns to procure food and intelligence, detaches them so much from all social bonds as to render them indifferent to the crimes of others. The observation that the pastoral manners, which have been 'adorned with the fairest attributes of peace and innocence, are much better adapted to the fierce and cruel habits of a military life,'* is confirmed by the manners of the shepherds of these mountains. Where the townships have land enough to employ the inhabitants in agriculture and gardening, as at Poli, the inhabitants are kind and gentle; and when a robbery or outrage is committed, the first exclamation always is, he who has done the evil must be an idle fellow, who had not patience to wait while his bread was growing. But Capranica and some other mountain towns which have no arable land annexed to them, while they supply their neighbours

* Gibbon, Dec. and Fall, Chap. xxvi.

with shepherds, also furnish their annual quota to the ranks of the banditti."

A band of gipsies, pedlars, rogues, and fortunetellers, as with us, suddenly made their appearance one afternoon at Poli. They seemed to be the forerunners of the brigands, who had been talked of during several days, for the next morning at dawn the gipsies disappeared, and it was ascertained to a certainty that a troop of banditti were at Guadagnola, a mountain peak,* about two hours' walk above Poli.

"Early the day before, which was the 12th of August 1819, these robbers had seized two lads, assistants to a surveyor. They were employed measuring in the wood leading to Guadagnola, when two men, armed, came suddenly up to them near the little chapel to the Madonna, and seized the youngest boy, who was going along the road; the other was a few paces within the wood. The robbers called to him by the opprobrious name 'razza di cane,' and presenting their muskets, forced him to come to them; when giving him a blow, they forced him and his companion before them to an open space in the wood, where they found eleven of their companions sitting on the grass, engaged in different occupations; the two who had taken the lads being sentinels, posted to give notice of any approaching danger. Their chief object in seizing the boys appeared to be that of obtaining information as to the principal inhabitants of Poli,

* "This rock is like a hollow nest, within which the houses are entirely concealed: they are built so closely to each other as barely to allow an ass or mule to pass along even the principal street. There are about fifty houses and a small church, built of such materials as the mountain affords, chiefly covered over with shingle, on the top of which great stones are laid to prevent the winds from carrying away the roofs. There are about two hundred and fifty inhabitants, whose chief riches consist in their pigs and poultry, and most of them seek their summer employment in the unwholesome fields of the Campagna."

and their places of daily resort, in order to capture some of them if possible, and thereby obtain a good sum as ransom. But they had another reason for taking them, and detaining them the whole day; and this was to prevent their giving such information concerning them and their situation in the neighbouring towns, as might enable the townspeople, or the military, to surround them. They, therefore, kept them prisoners till night; treated them very well, and gave them bread and cheese, with some water, which was all they had for themselves, though the lads understood that they expected a provision of meat and some wine at night.

“During the time of their captivity, the lads had leisure to observe the dresses and the employments of the banditti: the latter were chiefly gaming. As soon as two sentinels were placed, which were frequently changed, the party divided into different sets, one of which played at cards; another at *morra**, for a louis-d’or per chance; a third party danced, while a fourth listened to a story, or ballad, in all the careless profligacy of an outlaw’s life. Their dress was picturesque, yet military; that of some of them was a

* This is a game very prevalent among the lower classes in the South of Italy, particularly at Naples, where, on a feast-day, the ear is constantly assailed with the mingling sounds of “five, seven,” &c. pronounced with wonderful rapidity and loudness. The game is thus played. Two men stand close to each other—each keeps his right hand clenched, and they throw these right hands out, opening a certain number of the fingers. The players both cry out together, and he who guesses the right number of fingers thrown out by himself and antagonist, marks a point. The motion of the hands is astonishingly quick, and the number must be pronounced as they are extended. Mrs. G—— says the game is not unlike one which children play in England, “Buck, buck, how many horns do I hold up?” I never saw this English play, but I am inclined to believe with Mr. Blount that the *morra* of the modern Italians is the same as the *micare digitis* of the ancient Romans.

good deal tattered, but all had blue velveteen short jackets and breeches, linen shirts, drawers, and stockings; the latter bound round with leathern thongs, which fastened on a kind of sandal; their shirts open at the neck, with the collar turned back. The waist-coat was fastened with bunches of the little silver filigree buttons common at Naples; two rows of the same buttons adorned the jacket, which was cut in the military style, and had several pockets on each side. Many of them had two coloured silk handkerchiefs fastened to their button-holes by one corner, the rest being tucked into the pockets. Round the waist they wore an ammunition belt, called here a *padroncina*, (or the young mistress,) made of stout leather, having slips for cartridges, and fastened in front with a silver or plated clasp. Across the left shoulder another leathern belt was slung, in which there was a case for a knife, a fork, and a spoon, some of which, the boys said, were of silver. There was besides a hanger, or *couteau de chasse*, the weapon with which most murders in this part of the country are committed, with a brass handle, ornamented with silver, or plated.

“Every robber had a silver heart, containing a picture of the Madonna and child, suspended by a red ribbon to his neck, and fastened with another of the same colour to his left side. Their hats had high pointed crowns, like those of Salvator Rosa’s banditti, surrounded with bands of alternate red and white near the top, and a black band and buckle near the brim. He, whom the lads took for the chief, though we learned afterwards that he was not so, was distinguished by a quantity of gold lace on his jacket and pantaloons; this we concluded to be the spoil of some Neapolitan officer. They all wore large gold ear-rings with drops; and two of the youngest had each two long ringlets on each side of the face, the rest of the

hair being short. Many of them had gold watches, seals, chains, rings, and other trinkets, which they boasted of having taken from English travellers.

“The boys described the robbers as being stout, active, young men, excepting one, who was very short and corpulent, with a bald head; he appeared to be the butt of the rest, and, like Falstaff, to be not only witty himself, but the cause of wit in others; they called him the gourd-merchant, alluding to the gourd-like smoothness of his bald head. After asking about the different inhabitants of Poli by name, the brigands began to question their prisoners about the THREE English who were there; whether they did not go out into the woods to paint, and other questions of the kind. The boys, being really ignorant, could give them no information about us, and very little about any one else; and, therefore, they were dismissed at night-fall, and made the best of their way home, where they were the first to give notice of the vicinity of the brigands, although several shepherds had seen them, and had even made purchases of bread and other provisions for them. The gonfaloniere, for there is still the *name* of that magistrate at Poli, then sent to Palestrina for the marshal of the district, who alone can order out the civic guard, *i. e.* about twenty of the young peasants, into whose hands muskets are put for the occasion, and, while employed, they receive each twenty-five bajocchi, or about a shilling English, a-day: their duty is to watch their own town by day and night, and to join the *civica* of other towns, or the regular military, in pursuit of outlaws and robbers.”

When their secrecy was no longer of use to the robbers, or dangerous to the inhabitants, the shepherds confessed that they (the banditti) had visited their sheep-cots, near Capranica, on the evening of the 9th of August. “Only the day after we had been on the very same rock,” says our author, “to see the sun set

from it; and as we listened to the distant sound of a bagpipe among the hills, a young lad, who was with us, said, 'That is most likely a shepherd from the Abruzzi, or some of those wild Neapolitan places that harbour the outlaws.' The brigands ate two of the shepherds' sheep, merely skinning them, and roasting them whole, and honoured them with their company for two nights. They sent one of them to Poli for bread, keeping his companions as hostages, and threatening all the shepherds with death, if they revealed having seen them within eight days. These threats, which are usual from the brigands, and the facility of executing them on the poor shepherds, always in the open country and solitary places, would sufficiently account for the silence or collusion of the latter.

"With their hosts, the bandits talked very freely, treating of their own private histories and modes of life. They showed them the silver heart and picture of the Madonna, which each had suspended from his neck, saying, 'We know that we are likely to die a violent death; but in our hour of need we have these,' touching their muskets, 'to struggle for our lives with, and this,' kissing the image of the Virgin, 'to make our death easy.' This mixture of ferocity and superstition is one of the most terrific features in the character of the banditti of Italy.

"There was among this troop, which now so immediately interested us, shut up, as we were, at Poli," says Mrs. Graham, "one man from the neighbourhood, a shepherd, whose master had treated him rather cruelly, and who now said that he thought it high time to call upon his master, and thank him for his courtesy. This observation being carried to his master, he was, of course, careful not to go out of the town-gates alone, unarmed, or on foot. However, the brigands made him pay for his safety, or that of his flocks, which were exposed in the country; for

they sent him an order to provide a number of velvet suits, linen shirts and drawers, and stout great-coats, and to deposit them at a certain spot, by a given time, on pain of losing his flocks on the hills. The proprietor sent a messenger to Rome to inquire of the Government, whether his property would be protected or guaranteed to him, if he refused to supply the robbers, or whether he should supply the robbers with the clothing required. The answer was such as to induce him to provide the articles demanded by the appointed day.

“The Mareschal having arrived from Palestrina, in consequence of the message of the Gonfaloniere of Poli, the civic guard was at last called out, and a singular scene presented itself, as we looked from our windows. The Mareschal, with a single horse-pistol stuck in his belt, was walking up and down, in consultation with the principal inhabitants of the place; for there was a pretty general expectation that the brigands would collect in greater numbers and attempt to enter Poli that night. By-and-by, twelve or fourteen young men joined them, armed with muskets and fowling-pieces, of various construction; these formed the civic guard. Some of the guns were their own, others belonged to Government, and were lent for the occasion. About ten o'clock, the party went to a little platform, just without the principal gate, which usually serves as a play-ground for children, to fire at a mark, and try their powder, regardless of the spot being exactly within sight of the enemy's camp. At length they set out in pursuit of the brigands; but, as we afterwards learned, with little hope or intention of doing more than driving them from their immediate haunt in the neighbourhood, and, perhaps, alarming them; for many had gone out without powder and shot, and few with more than a second charge. Shortly after their departure, a party of nearly two hundred men, who had been out to collect and drive

in the cattle from the hill, entered the town, with such shouts of joy and triumph that we thought that some detachment of the brigands had been met with and routed; but we soon discovered the very unusual sight of a herd of fat oxen, with cows and fine calves, or rather heifers, running down the street, followed by their drivers, and accompanied by all the women and children of the town. Towards night, a lieutenant, with a very small party of his Holiness' soldiers, entered the town, in consequence of a message sent to Tivoli the night before; they were intended to assist the town-guard, and created an unusual degree of bustle. The lodging and victualling them did not seem to be a matter very easily adjusted, nor indeed very agreeable. Their gay dresses and trained step formed no small contrast with the rustic air and coarse clothing of our old friends; and the superiority they assumed, seemed by no means pleasing to the Polesi. At length the lanterns, which had been moving up and down the street at least two hours later than they had ever done before, dropped off one by one, the expected attack on the town was forgotten, and the night passed quietly as usual.

“Early the next morning, another party of the townsmen, accompanied by most of the soldiers, set out in search of the brigands; and, in the afternoon, the party of the day before returned. They had found the lair of the robbers yet warm; the grass was trodden down; fragments of bread and other food, mingled with remnants of clothing, torn and cut packs of cards, and broken ornaments, lay strewed about the ground. The skin of a sheep was hanging on a tree; and everything bore the marks of a very hasty removal. The guard found a shepherd, with some dressed meat, and employed in making sandals of a kid's skin; this they taxed him with having killed for the brigands; but he asserted that he had taken it

from the mouth of a wolf which had been at the flock the night before.

“ The direction taken by the banditti, on the two following days, was by no means certain, and we began to hope that they had left the neighbourhood. But on the morning after, some women having reported that they heard a whistling in a deep glen, within a mile of the town, on the road towards Palestrina, the civic guard was ordered out in pursuit, and one of our party determined to accompany it. A soldier and a spy headed the little troop. As soon as they got out of the town, and reached the wood, the soldier directed them to march in Indian file. Though the result of this third expedition was as unsuccessful as that of the two others, the danger, or at least the apprehension of it, was sufficient to show the temper of the people. As they approached the suspected spot, strict silence was kept. A woman, who acted as guide, at length stopped, and the party began to descend into a deep defile, with the utmost caution, and great difficulty. It was a romantic spot, the bed of a river, at this season almost dry; and one of the men, as he looked fearfully round, whispered, ‘ This is, indeed, a place for banditti.’ In the absence of the robbers themselves, the peasants climbing among the loose stones at the bottom, made a picturesque addition to the natural wildness of the scene. Here some of the people were observed to lag, to the great distress of the foremost, who exclaimed, ‘ Per Dio quelli ci lasciano,’ (By heaven those fellows are leaving us!) The sides of the ravine, where not rocky, are clothed with large chestnut trees and brushwood, so that the danger of the situation, supposing the brigands to be concealed among the trees, reduced the soldiers to look for a convenient place to ascend. There was a steep, narrow, sloping field planted with maize, with chestnut trees on each side; the troop climbed up to

it in silence, and the soldier directed the men to lower their muskets, that they might not be seen over the top of the brushwood. The spy, who was foremost, advanced towards the trees, half raised his musket, and then stepped back to the soldier, and whispered, which made the people believe they had found the robbers; and one of them said, 'Per Cristo, eccoli qui!' (Here they are,) and hesitated.

"The wood was entered, but nothing found there; and the rest of the march was only a repetition of the same cautious walk. The spy, who had left the company to examine a narrow path, was nearly shot by one of the men, who heard a rustling among the leaves. A smoke at a distance, which at first gave some alarm, turned out to be nothing but some chaff which a peasant was burning. At length they arrived at the top of the hill, between Poli and Capranica, a station where they resolved to wait for another division of the townsmen, which had gone round by a different road. At length they appeared, but neither party liked to approach the other, till a certain red jacket was recognised, when they joined, and returned the shortest way home. While the first party had waited under the trees for the other, sentinels had been posted all round, at a hundred yards' distance. The rest amused themselves by climbing for squirrels' nests, and telling stories of one another, from which it appeared that more than one of them had escaped from prison for attempts at assassination. One in particular, who seemed a kind of harlequin among them, had had more than one hair-breadth 'scape when the sbirri were in pursuit of him. On one occasion he had escaped by leaping from a high window; and to prove that he had lost none of his agility, he diverted himself with climbing to the extremities of the high chestnut boughs, and dropping off them to the ground.

“Shortly after the return of the guard, we found that the banditti had really been in an opposite direction, on the heights of San Gregorio, whence they had taken a quantity of bread and wine. We therefore went out, and took a short walk without the gates. The near fields were more than usually peopled; for several small flocks and a few heads of cattle had been driven in from the hills, that they might go into the town at night for protection. We observed that the boy who went daily to cut wood for the baker had muffled the bell that hung round his ass’s neck, in order to prevent the noise from betraying his master. The farmers who had occasion to go to the threshing-floors, all went well mounted, and with an attendant or two. On going home, we learned that a surgeon, and two or three other persons, had been seized by the brigands, and carried to the mountains, in order to obtain a ransom. They were inhabitants of Castel Madama, a small town near Tivoli, and so named from Margaret of Austria, daughter of Charles V. This news necessarily increased the consternation of the householders of Poli, who now resolved to make every effort to assemble and arm the young men of the town. At night a small detachment of Polesi, which had been sent to join the people of Casapa in an attempt to drive the banditti from San Gregorio where the tocsin had been sounded on the capture of the people from Castel Madama, returned. They were sent back without attempting to do anything, as it was feared that any open measures against the robbers, before the ransom was paid, would endanger the lives of the prisoners.”

On the 18th of August, the day of Saint Agapet, when there was a church festival, and a fair at the neighbouring town of Palestrina, about two hundred and fifty persons ventured out from Poli to go to them. “One party preceded the other about half

an hour, and both set off before day-break. As the sun rose, the rear party were so alarmed that they began to think of returning home, seeing a number of persons through the trees, whom they at first took for robbers, but the sight of the women's white head-clothes satisfied them that they were townsfolk, and the two parties joined and met with nothing farther to startle them on the road. Shortly after they left Poli, it was known that all the *poor* prisoners had been dismissed by the banditti; but those from whom they could hope to extort a ransom were detained. About noon a report reached us that one of the captives had been barbarously murdered; and towards night, as it had been ascertained at Tivoli that the surgeon, the only remaining prisoner, was safe, an order came to Poli for all the force it was possible to assemble to keep the pass of Guadagnola towards Poli, as every other avenue by which the brigands could escape was supposed to be already sufficiently guarded. This order arrived about sun-set. Most of the men were absent at Palestrina, so that the boys and old people were collected in the street to choose out of. Their wives, mothers, and grandmothers, came out, each with her lantern, to beg that her husband or child might be left to guard her house, in case the robbers, taking advantage of the absence of the strong men, should attack the town. The families who possessed arms refused to lend them to the guard, and as it appeared that the night was likely to be wasted in altercations, the magistrates and the officer, who still remained in the town, resolved to enter the houses forcibly, and take what arms they could find. Two or three houses were accordingly entered, but it consumed the time equally, and the guns were so well concealed, that there was little chance of obtaining enough to arm the few men they could provide; therefore they resolved to wait till the

morning, when the men would be returned from Palestrina. The scene in the streets, where all public business is transacted, was not only quite new to us, but curious in itself. The armed and the unarmed, the willing and the unwilling, were all vociferating at once; the women were going about with their infants in one hand and a lantern in the other; now aggravating, now quieting the disputants. The people from the feast at Palestrina came gradually dropping in, laden with their nuts or other fairings, and mostly half intoxicated, all mingling together, and talking of danger from banditti to be apprehended that night, or to be provided against next day, without ever considering that, while they were disputing, the ruffians would escape in any direction they chose. Such was the evening of the eighteenth. The morning of the nineteenth was not much more orderly. The men, indeed, sober, and in earnest, for this time, had armed themselves well, and were leaving the town in greater numbers than we had yet seen assembled. Their wives and children, believing there was now some real danger, were sitting lamenting in groups about the street; but they might have spared themselves the pain. The great mountain pass had been left unguarded for more than twelve hours. Half that time would have sufficed the brigands, with their active habits, to have escaped to a distance far out of the reach of pursuit."

Tired with being pent up, and of seeing a town with twelve hundred inhabitants kept in continual alarm, our courageous countrywoman and her two companions, with an escort, left Poli, on the 21st of August, for Tivoli. On her road she passed the Emperor Hadrian's villa, among whose ruins the robbers had passed the night, and then lay concealed. They must have seen her and her party pass, but as the number of their muskets were inferior, they did

not risk an attack. She arrived safely at Tivoli, which she found in a state of still greater consternation than the little town she had left. Her escort joined immediately the people of Tivoli in pursuit of the outlaws, who were seen crossing the hills behind the town.

“ Every day, while we remained at Tivoli, brought some new particulars concerning the march of the banditti. It was ascertained that their entire number amounted to about one hundred and forty, divided into companies not exceeding twenty in each, for the sake of more easy subsistence. The head-quarters appeared to be at Rio Freddo, and in the woods of Subiaco. Their spies, and those who bought provisions for them, were lavishly paid, and the instances of any information being given against them were very rare. On one occasion, however, they had seized a ploughman belonging to Rio Freddo, and, after beating him, they had sent him to his house to fetch a few dollars, as the price of his future security while at work. On his way the ploughman met the robber-hunters belonging to Subiaco, and gave them notice of the situation of the robbers. They desired him to fetch his money, and go to the appointed place with it, and if he found them still there to leave a mark at a particular tree. Meantime they took measures for surrounding the robbers' lair, and having done so, waited patiently till the poor man had paid his money, and made the mark agreed on ; and this they were more careful to do, as, had the brigands suspected he had given information, they would certainly have put him to death. As soon as they knew him to be safe, the hunters drew close round the enemy, who were seven in number, and fired : two were killed on the spot, and the five others, of whom one was found dead of his wounds near the place next day, left their fire-arms, and concealed themselves in

the thicket of Arcinuzzo, between Rio Freddo and Subiaco."

"Every evening the episcopal church-bell rang at Tivoli, to set the guards at the different bridges leading to the town, as the people were in nightly expectation that the brigands would enter it in search of provisions, with which the shepherds had become rather shy of supplying them, since two or three of them had been taken up and imprisoned for so doing. On the night of the 21st or 22nd seven robbers had gone to San Vetturino, armed chiefly with bludgeons, and had taken nearly all the bread in the town, but had not carried off any of the inhabitants, who, in fact, are not rich enough to afford much ransom. But the most intrepid gang lingered about Tivoli, where there are a number of rich proprietors, who might have furnished a considerable booty*."

"The body of a murdered man was found at the gate of San Gregorio, with twenty wounds, inflicted with knives. The brigands, emboldened by success, seemed determined to press closer round all the hill-towns. None of the principal inhabitants ventured without the walls, and even the work-people were robbed of their ornaments and their little savings." Such being the dreadful state of this part of the

* "After we returned to Rome, we learned, that the same gang had seized the arch-priest of Vicovaro, whose nephew, having offered some resistance, was killed on the spot. The ransom demanded for the priest and a friend was so exorbitant that it could not be raised, on which the ruffians sent their ears to their families, and afterwards some of their fingers. At length, tired of waiting, and perhaps irritated by the complaints of the two prisoners, they murdered them! There is a sort of ferocious jollity among these brigands more shocking, perhaps, than their actual cruelty. They had stripped the priest of his robes and clerical hat two or three days before they killed him; one of their number put on the sacerdotal clothing, and substituted for it his own, with his high-crowned hat, which they forced the poor priest to wear."

country, the spiritual author and her friends abbreviated their villeggiatura, and leaving the lovely scenery of Tivoli—its cascade and grottoes, its woods and rocks, its villas and graceful ancient temples, returned to Rome early in September.

During her short stay at Tivoli she became acquainted with Signor Cherubini, the surgeon of Castel Madama, of whose captivity among the robbers she had heard so much at Poli. He was a man of undoubted veracity, and bore a high character, not only as an able surgeon but a good man. He related to her every particular of his capture and liberation, allowing her to write them down; and she was afterwards so fortunate as to procure a circumstantial account written by himself to a friend, which abounds with interest, and striking traits of character.

Signor Cherubino was summoned early in the morning of the 17th of August to Tivoli, to attend a sick nun and a gentleman of that place, by a factor well known to him, and named Bartolomeo Marasca. They set off on horseback together, the factor being armed with a gun.

“ We had scarcely passed the second arch of the ancient aqueducts,” writes the poor surgeon, “ when two armed men suddenly rushed out from the thicket and stopped the way, and pointing their long guns at the factor, who was riding a little before me, ordered him to dismount. Meantime two others came out of the wood behind me, so as to have us between them and the former two. Both the factor and myself had dismounted at the first intimation. The two men behind me ordered me to turn back instantly, and to walk before them, not by the road to Castel Madama, but that to San Gregorio. The first question the robbers asked me, was, whether I was the Prince of Castel Madama, meaning, I fancy, the Vice-Prince who had passed the road a little before me. To this

I answered, that I was not the Prince, but a poor surgeon of Castel Madama; and to convince them that I spoke truth, I showed them my case of lancets, and my bag of surgical instruments; but it was of no use. During our walk towards San Gregorio, I perceived that the number of brigands increased to thirteen. One took my watch from me, another my case of lancets. At the beginning of our march, we met, at short distances, four youths belonging to San Gregorio, and one elderly man, all of whom were obliged to share my captivity: shortly after we met another man, and an old woman, whose ear-rings were taken, and they were then permitted to continue their journey. In the meadows by the last ruined aqueduct, the horses which the factor Marasca and I had ridden, were turned loose, and after passing a ravine, we began to climb the steepest part of the mountain with such speed, that, together with the alarm I felt, made me pant so violently, that I trembled every moment lest I should burst a blood-vessel. At length, however, we reached the top of the mountain, where we were allowed to rest, and we sat down on the grass. Marasca then talked a good deal with the brigands; showed himself well acquainted with their numbers, and said other things, which my wretched state of mind prevented me from attending to very distinctly; but seeing him apparently so intimate with the robbers, a suspicion crossed me that I was betrayed by him."

The chief brigand turned to the poor surgeon, and throwing him his lancet case, said he would think about his ransom. The surgeon represented his poverty with tears, but his ransom was fixed as high as two thousand dollars; and pen, ink, and paper being produced, he was obliged to write for that sum, which he did, with all the earnestness that the presence of thirteen assassins, and the fear of death,

could inspire. The thing was now to procure a messenger to carry this letter. This was soon done. A man was ploughing on the side of the hill lower down, and another, belonging to Castel Madama, was seen in the flat below. They were both secured by the robbers, and despatched with the surgeon's letter to Tivoli.

The brigands stayed where they were for three hours, when the apparition of an armed force in the country below induced them to decamp. They retired towards the most woody part of a still higher mountain. "After a long and most painful march, finding himself in a place of safety, the brigand chief halted, there to await the return of the messenger; but as that return was still delayed, the chief came up to me angrily, and said, that it might happen to me as it did to a certain inhabitant of Veletri, who had been taken by this very band, who entered his house in disguise, and carried him off to the woods, and because his ransom was long in coming, they killed him, and when the money came, the messenger found his lifeless body. I was much alarmed at this story, and regarded it as a forerunner of my own speedy death."

The terrified surgeon, who certainly in his narrative does not affect the virtue he had not, then told the robbers he might have written another letter to Castel Madama with orders to sell whatever he possessed, and to send up the money immediately. This pleased them: another letter was written, and one of the prisoners from San Gregorio was sent off with it.

"After he was gone, I saw my companion the factor Marasca walking about carelessly among the brigands, looking at their arms, and making angry gestures; but he did not speak. Shortly after, he came and sat down by me; it was then that the chief, having a large stick in his hand, came up to him, and without saying a single word, gave him a blow on the back of

the head just where it joins the neck. It did not kill him, so he rose and cried most piteously, "I have a wife and children, for God's sake spare my life!" and thus saying, he defended himself as well as he could with his hands. Other brigands closed round him; a struggle ensued, and they rolled together down a steep precipice. I closed my eyes; my head dropped on my breast, I heard a cry or two, but I seemed to have lost all sensation. In a very short time the brigands returned, and I saw the chief thrust his dagger, still stained with blood, into its sheath: then turning to me, he announced the death of the factor in these words: 'Do not fear! we have killed the factor because he was a sbirro; such as you are not sbirri. He looked at our arms, and seemed disposed to murmur; and if the force had come up, he might have been dangerous.' And thus they got rid of Marasca. The chief, seeing that the money for me still did not come from Tivoli, and being afraid lest troops should be sent, seemed uncertain what to do, and said to his companions, 'How shall we dispose of our prisoners? We must either kill them, or send them home;' but they could not decide on either, and he came and sat down by me. I, remembering that I had a little money about me, which might amount altogether to thirty pauls, (three crowns,) gave them frankly to him to gain his good-will. He took it in good part, and said he would keep it to pay the spy."

It now began to rain very heavily—it was four o'clock in the afternoon, and no messenger returned. At last voices were heard on the hills. The robbers feared they might be soldiers instead of messengers, but they at last said, "Come down!" There was an anxious silence, but no one came.

"After another short interval, we heard another voice also from above on the left; and then we said, 'Surely this must be the messenger.' But the bri-

gands would not trust to it, and forced us to go on to a place a good deal higher, and level with that whence the voice proceeded. When we reached it they all presented their muskets, keeping the prisoners behind them; and thus prepared to stand on the defensive, they cried out, 'Come forward!' In a few moments two men appeared among the trees; one of them the peasant of Castel Madama, who had been sent in the morning to Signor Celestini at Tivoli, the other the ploughman of San Gregorio his companion. As soon as they were recognised, they were ordered to lie down with their faces to the ground, and asked if they came alone. But the man of Castel Madama answered, 'It would be a fine thing indeed, if I, who am almost dead with fatigue, after climbing these mountains with the weight of five hundred scudi about me, should be obliged to prostrate myself with my face to the earth! Here's your money; it was all that could be got together in the town!' Then the chief took the money, and ordered us to change our station. Having arrived at a convenient place, we stopped, and he asked if there were any letters? Being answered that there were two, he gave them to me to read; and learning from them that the sum sent was five hundred crowns, he counted them, and finding the number exact, said all was well; praised the punctuality of the peasant, and gave him some silver as a reward for his trouble: his companion also received a small present."

The robbers now released the poor peasants from San Gregorio. "I, therefore," says the surgeon, "with the peasant of Castel Madama, remained the only prisoners; and we were made to march across the mountains. I asked why they did not set me at liberty, as they had received so considerable a sum on my account? The chief answered, that I must await the return of the messenger with the second letter,

who had been sent to Castel Madama. I continued to press him to let me go before night, which was now drawing on apace, saying, that perhaps it had not been possible to procure any money at Castel Madama, and that if I was to remain out all night on the hill in the cold air, it would have been better to have killed me at once. Then the chief stopped me, and bade me take good care how I said such things, for that to them killing a man was a matter of perfect indifference. The same thing was also said to me by another outlaw, who gave me his arm during our rocky journey. At length we reached the top of a mountain, where there were some pools of water formed by the rain; and then they gave me some very hard and black bread that I might eat, and drink some of that water. I drank three times; but I found it impossible to eat the bread."

They continued walking over these mountain tops till midnight, when they met an ass and a shepherd. They mounted the worn-out surgeon on the ass, and the shepherd led them all to his hut, near which was a threshing-floor, and, something much better for them, a sheep-fold, whence a sheep was speedily purloined, skinned, and roasted. It was eaten, too, before the surgeon, who had dropped asleep near the blazing hearth, awoke. But the chief had reserved a few slices for him, which he now spitted on his ram-rod, roasted, and gave to him, apologising for the absence of salt. (Save the chief and a sentinel or two, gorged with mutton and black bread, all the rest of the banditti were fast asleep on the floor, round the fire.) "I could scarcely force myself," says the surgeon, "to swallow a few morsels; but I drank a little wine which had been found in a small barrel at the threshing-floor. This was the only time I saw any of the brigands drink anything but water. The chief told me they were always afraid when fresh

wine came, lest it should be drugged ; and that they always made whoever brought it drink a good deal of it ; and if in two hours no bad symptoms appeared, then they used the wine."

From the shepherd's hut they went to the sheepfold, where the robbers possessed themselves of some lumps of boiled meat, a great coat, and some cheeses. Here the chief made the poor surgeon write another letter to Castel Madama, telling his friends, that, if they did not send eight hundred crowns on the following day, the robbers would put him to death, or carry him to the woods of Fajola, if there was a farthing less than that sum. " I told the countryman, who was about to carry this letter, to tell my friends that if they found no purchasers at Castel Madama for my effects, which I had ordered them to sell, they might send them to Tivoli and sell them there for whatever they would fetch. The chief of the brigands also begged to have a few shirts sent. One of the brigands proposed, I don't know why, to cut off one of my ears, and send it with the letter to Castel Madama. It was well for me that the chief did not approve of this civil proposal ; so it was not done. The chief, however, wanted the countryman to set out that moment ; but the countryman of Castel Madama said, with his usual coolness, that it was not possible to go down that steep mountain during the night ; on which the chief told him he might remain in the sheepcote all night, and set out at daylight. ' But take notice,' said he, ' if you do not return by the twentieth hour to-morrow to the sheepcote with the eight hundred crowns, you may go about your business, but we shall throw Cherubini (the surgeon) into some pit.' The peasant tried to persuade them that perhaps it might not be possible to collect so much money in a small town at so short a notice, and begged to have a little more time : but the chief

answered, that they had no time to waste, and that if he had not returned by the twentieth hour, they would kill Cherubini."

The robbers again put themselves in movement. There was an improvement in their road, for instead of the rough thickets, they came to fine tall timber trees, the boles of which were comparatively smooth, save where a fallen tree here and there lay across them. But the surgeon was spent with fatigue, and sore afraid, the threats of death constantly ringing in his ear.

"I therefore recommended myself to God, and was begging him to have compassion on my wretched state, when one of the brigands, a man of great stature, who figured among them as a kind of second chief, came up to me, and taking me by the arm, assisted me to walk, and said, 'Now, Cherubini, that you cannot tell the man of Castel Madama (whom we had left at the sheepcote waiting for day-light), I assure you that to-morrow, as soon as he returns, you shall go home free, however small be the sum he brings. Be of good cheer, therefore, and do not distress yourself.' At that moment I felt such comfort from the assurances of the outlaw, that he appeared to me to be an angel from heaven; and without thinking why I should not, I kissed his hand, and thanked him fervently for his unexpected kindness."

They next laid themselves down to sleep in a thicket, the robbers spreading sheepskins for the doctor, and the chief wrapping up his legs in his own capote. Two men kept awake as sentinels.

"I know not how long we had rested," continues Signor Cherubini, "when one of the sentinels came, and gave notice of daybreak. 'Come to me when it is lighter,' said the chief; and all was again quiet. I turned my face so as not to see the brigands, and

dozed a little, till I was roused by the cry of some wild bird. I am not superstitious; but I had often heard that the shriek of the owl foreboded evil; and, in the state of spirits in which I was, everything had more than its usual effect on me. I started, and said, 'What bird was that?' They answered, 'A hawk.'—'Thank God!' I said, and lay down again. Among my sufferings I cannot forget the stinging and humming of the gnats, which fastened on my face and throat; but after the death of poor Marasca, I dared not even raise my hand to drive them away, lest it should be taken for a sign of impatience."

Soon after this they all arose, and after an hour's walk halted in another thicket, where they breakfasted. After their meal they lay down to sleep as before, all save one literate bandit, who amused himself by reading the romance of the Cavalier Meschino. In an hour they awoke, and filed off, one by one, to a higher station, leaving a sentinel to guard the surgeon.

"In another hour," says Signor Cherubini, "the youngest man of the robbers came to relieve the guard, who then went and joined the others. When I saw this, and perceived they were engaged in a kind of council of war, I feared that they had taken some new resolution about my life, and that the new sentinel was come to put their cruel designs in execution; but he very soon said to me, 'Be of good cheer, for to-night you will be at home!' which gave me some comfort; but as I could not entirely trust them, I had still an internal fear, which, however, I endeavoured to hide. Shortly afterwards we were called to join the rest, our station being now on the mountain commonly called Colle Picione, not very far from the ancient sanctuary of Mentorella. There we remained the rest of the day, only going out of the way once, on the approach of a flock of goats,

that we might not be seen by the goatherds ; but we soon returned. Then the second chief, who said he was of Sonnino, and one of the five who went to treat with the President of Frosinone, began to talk of the political nature of their situation. He said that Government would never succeed in putting them down by force ; that they are not a fortress to batter down with cannon, but rather birds which fly round the tops of the sharpest rocks, without having any fixed home ; that if, by any misfortune, seven perished, they were sure of ten recruits to replace their loss ; for criminals, who would be glad to take refuge among them, were never wanting ; that the number of their present company amounted to a hundred and thirty individuals ; and that they had an idea of undertaking some daring exploit, perhaps of threatening Rome itself. He ended by saying, that the only way to put an end to their depredations would be to give them a general pardon without reservation or limitation, that they might all return to their houses, without fear of treachery ; but otherwise, they would not trust to, nor treat with any one ; and added, that this was the reason for which they had not concluded anything with the Prelate sent to Frosinone to treat with them. As it was, their company was determined to trust nothing but a pardon from the Pope's own lips. One of the brigands begged me to endeavour to obtain from Government the freedom of his wife, Mariuccia Carcapola di Pisterno, now in the prison of Saint Michael in Rome. Another said to me, ' Have patience, Signor Cherubini ; we made a blunder when we took you ; we intended to have had the Prince, who, according to our information, should have passed by at that very time.' In fact, he was to have travelled that road ; and just before I passed, not the Prince, but the person commonly called so, the Vice-Prince, or

agent, Signor Filippo Gazoni, had gone by, but, fortunately for him, they did not know him, because, as I understood, he was walking along leisurely, only accompanied by an unarmed boy, who was leading his horse. The banditti bit their fingers with rage when they found they had let him slip, for they said they would not have released him under three thousand crowns. The brigand who said all this had the collar of the Madonna delle Carmine round his neck, and said to me ‘Suffer patiently, for the love of God.’

“Then the chief of the robbers came to me, and told me he was not very well, and desired me to prescribe for him, which I did, in writing. Another, the same who had taken my watch from me, told me that the watch did not go, and showed it me. I found that he had broken the glass and the minute-hand. He said, if I had any money, he would sell it me; but I gave it him back, saying nothing, but shrugging up my shoulders. Meantime the day was drawing to a close, and the chief, taking out his watch, said it was now twenty o’clock*. He called the shepherd to him, and ordered him to go back to the sheepfold which we had left during the night, and see if the countryman was come back with the answer to my second letter to Castel Madama. In that case he ordered him to accompany him back to the place we were now at; and if he were not come, he ordered him to wait three hours, and if he did not come then, to return to us alone. The shepherd obeyed, and, after about an hour and a half, he came back with the countryman and another shepherd who had been sent with him. They brought with them two sealed packets of money, which they said contained

* It will be remembered that the Italians count time by twenty-four hours to the day. The first hour, or one o’clock, being always one hour after sunset.

six hundred crowns. They also brought a few shirts, of homespun linen, which the chief had begged of me, and some little matter for me to eat, and a little wine to recruit me. But I could take nothing but a pear and a little wine; the rest was eaten by the robbers. They took the money without counting, and gave the messengers some silver for their pains; after which they permitted me to depart. And thus I found myself free from them, after having thanked them for their *civility* and for *my life*, which they had had *the goodness to spare*. On my way homeward, the two men of Castel Madama informed me, that the prisoner from San Gregorio, who was sent, the day before, with the first letter to Castel Madama for money, and who had not been seen since, had really been there, and had gone back the same day, at the hour and to the place appointed, with the sum of one hundred and thirty-seven crowns, sent from Castel Madama; but, the robbers having forgotten to send any one to meet him at the place agreed on, because we were a great way from it, the messenger returned to town with the money, after having waited till night, carrying back the intelligence that the factor had been killed, which alarmed all my townsmen, who began to fear for my life. I found that the last six hundred dollars had been furnished, half by Castel Madama, and half by Tivoli. I went on towards Castel Madama, where all the people anxiously expected me. In fact, a mile before I reached the town, I found a number of people, of all ranks, who had come out to meet me, and I arrived at home a little before night, in the midst of such public congratulations and acclamations as were never before heard, which presented a most affecting spectacle! I had hardly arrived when the Arch-priest Giustini ordered the bells to be rung, to call the people to the parish church. On the first sound, all the

people flocked thither with me, to render public and devout thanks to the most merciful God and to our protector Saint Michael the Archangel, for my deliverance. The priest had done the same when he first heard of my capture, and soon after, when he sent the six hundred crowns. Both times he had assembled his congregation in that very church to offer up public supplications to the Lord, to grant me that mercy which he deigned afterwards to show. I cannot conclude without saying, that the epoch of this my misfortune will be ever remembered by me. I shall always recollect that the Lord God visited me as a father: for, at the moment when his hand seemed to be heavy upon me, he moved the city of Tivoli, and the whole people of Castel Madama, even the very poorest, to subscribe their money, and sell their goods, in so short a time, and with such profusion, for my sake. The same epoch will also always remind me what gratitude I owe to those, particularly the Signors Cartoni and Celestini, both Romans, who with such openness of heart exerted themselves in my favour. I now pray God that he will preserve me from all the bad consequences which commonly arise out of similar misfortunes."

Such is the narrative of Signor Cherubini, which, while it conveys striking pictures of crime and a lawless life, impresses the mind also with touching traits of punctuality, humanity, and generosity on the part of the peasantry and these poor Italians generally. The contrast of vice and virtue, of ferocity and kindness, is perhaps no where more evident than in Italy, where the social affections flourish in the midst of the hardest growth of crime and cruelty.

The stories told and believed by the peasantry, of the origin and initiation of most of the principal outlaws, are horrid in the extreme. Mrs. Graham, to whom I am indebted for so many interesting and

characteristic details, furnishes the following, as "a pretty fair specimen" of the whole.

"A man who had accidentally committed homicide, being afraid of the consequences, fled from the States of the Church, to Conca, in the kingdom of Naples. There, being unprovided with a passport, he was taken up and imprisoned; but, 'by the grace of the Virgin and Saint John the Baptist,' he escaped to the woods; there, after wandering a month, and being almost starved, he met the banditti, who invited him to join them. To this he, nothing loth, consented, when, to try his manhood, they gave him a piece of human flesh roasted to eat, telling him it was part of a Christian's heart! 'It might have been two hearts,' said the ruffian, 'but I would have eaten it!' He had then to perform a noviciate of two years, hewing wood, drawing water, and performing other menial offices; but, a year ago, he figured as the chief of a party among them."

But a probation infinitely more atrocious than this repast on human hearts, was related to myself in the year 1821, when I was travelling in the Abruzzi, near the pass of Tagliacozzi, and not far from the frontier of the Roman States. The story was local, but my narrator, a peasant of the country, and then my guide, referred the event to rather a distant period of time.

A young man, who had been several years an outlaw, on the violent death of the chief of the troop he belonged to, aspired to be Capo-bandito in his stead. He had gone through his noviciate with honour, he had shown both cunning and courage in his calling as brigand, but the supremacy of the band was disputed with him by others, and the state of the times bade the robbers be specially careful as to whom they elected for their leader. He must be the strongest-nerved fellow of the set! The ambitious candidate offered to give any, even the most dreadful proof of

his strength of nerve, and a monster among his companions proposed he should go to his native village, and murder a young girl to whom he had been formerly attached.

“I will do it,” said the ruffian, who at once departed on his infernal mission.

When he reached the village, he dared not present himself, having begun his crimes there by murdering a comrade: he skulked behind an old stone fountain, outside of the village, until near sunset, when the women came forth with their copper vases on their heads to get their supplies of water at the fountain. His mistress came carelessly gossiping with the rest. He could have shot her with his rifle, but he was afraid of pursuit, and wanted, besides, time to secure and carry off a bloody trophy. He, therefore, remained quiet, only hoping that she might loiter behind the rest. She, however, was one of the first to balance her vessel of water on her head, and to take the path to the village, whither all the gossips soon followed her. What was now to be done? He was determined to go through the ordeal and consummate the hellish crime. A child went by the fountain whistling. He laid down his rifle, so as not to alarm the little villager, and presenting himself to him, gave him the reliquary he had worn round his neck for years, and which was well known to his mistress, and told him to run with it to her, and tell her an old friend desired to speak with her at the fountain. The child took the reliquary, and a piece of silver, which the robber gave him, on his vowing by the Madonna to say nothing about the matter in the village before one hour of the night, and ran on to the village. The robber then retired behind the old fountain, taking his rifle in his hand, and keeping a sharp look out, lest his mistress should betray him or not come alone.





A. M. Huffam. del.

S. Bull. sculp.

THE BANDIT'S TEST.

But the affectionate girl, who might have loved him still in spite of his guilt, who might have hoped to render him succour on some urgent need, or, perhaps, to hear that he was penitent and anxious to return to society, went alone, and met him at the fountain, where, as the bells of the village church were tolling the Ave Maria, her lover met her, and stabbed her to the heart! The monster then cut off her head, and ran away with it to join the brigands, who were obliged to own, that, after such a deed and such a proof as he produced, he was worthy to be their chief.

BRIGANDS OF LOMBARDY.

THERE is one part of Lombardy that has always been noted for brigandism. The traveller, who has gone the road between Milan and Turin, will remember the country about Vercelli, Novara, &c., and the frontiers of the Austro-Milanese States, and those of Piedmont, or of his Majesty of Sardinia. That is the spot.

According to my intelligent old friend, Signor C—, in the days of his youth, if you asked an inhabitant of a certain little town, (the *chef-lieu* of the robbers,) in that district, how his father had died, his answer was pretty sure to be “On the wheel!” And his grandfather?—“On the wheel!” And if you were curious to know what death he expected himself, he was pretty sure to refer you to the same wheel. In short, they were all a most lawless set of fellows. Many years after, when the north of Italy was in the hands of the French, when no frontier between the contiguous States was heeded, and when brigandism was almost put down, and the people there reduced to

a more peaceful mode of gaining their bread, you would never get one of them to meet a gen-d'arme without flinching. They could not help remembering the old antipathy that existed between them and the agents of the police, and though now pursuing an honest calling, and defended by those laws they had before outraged, they would skulk away at the sight of a distant gen-d'arme, just as the tamed fox, however well protected, sneaks into his kennel if he hear but the distant cry of the hounds.

A gentleman was travelling that road with two gens-d'armes for an escort, which is still considered necessary. He saw a covered country cart meeting his carriage without any appearance of a driver in it: the cart occupied the middle of the road, which was narrow; the day was a hot one, and the tired carter had gone fast to sleep under his awning. The gens-d'armes saw all this, and to rouse him, and to cause him to make way, they trotted along the road bawling out lustily. No sooner had the peasant, awakened by the noise, lifted up his sleepy head, and seen the soldiers, than out he bolted from his cart, threw himself into a deep ditch by the road side, and tried to make off. Aroused, as he had been, from sleep, when the force of habitual impressions is most likely to assert its sway, the sight of the gens-d'armes was too much for him, and it was not until he found he was running some danger of being drowned or smothered in the mud, that he recovered the consciousness of being, *pro tempore*, an honest man with nothing to fear. He then bawled out for help. A helping hand was lent him; and emerging from the "slough of despond," he moved his clumsy vehicle out of the way: but even then, when the gentleman's carriage went on its journey, and the gens-d'armes with it, so strong was the "attraction of repulsion" between the peasant and the soldiers of the police, that the former seemed to drive

on his horses with speed until the windings of the road concealed him.

But, in the days to which my amusing old friend Signor C——'s anecdotes of robbers refer, such fears as these were unknown; and the brigands, instead of being confined to a limited district, had the free range of the Lombard plain, and carried on their depredations under, nay, even within the walls of Milan. This was about the year 1770-1, when Austria had abandoned her beautiful Lombard provinces to the *mis-government* of certain secretaries of State, who were almost as great robbers within the walls of the capital, as the banditti were without, and men in every way disqualified for the maintenance of good order and prosperity. The bands of outlaws increased to such a degree that no farming establishment, however large, and no village or small town, was secure from their depredations. They were accustomed to levy contributions both in specie and in kind, but do not appear to have adopted the improvement of carrying off prisoners and keeping them until ransomed. On the contrary, my friend, who was an ardent sportsman in his youth, says, that, though he and his comrades, respectable inhabitants of Milan, could hardly go a mile beyond La Porta Romana, or the Roman gate of the city, without meeting some of these robbers, they were never farther molested by them, than in being obliged to give them a little powder and shot. This was indeed generally the only transaction between the brigands and sportsmen. A fact comparatively in honour of the liberal spirit of the brigands of Lombardy, for in certain other countries in the south of Italy, and in my days, as I have sufficiently shown, a man of property, who had fallen into the hands of robbers, with only a snipe in his bag, would have been no more allowed to escape than if he carried the revenue of many a fat acre in his purse; it would

have been there—"Off to the mountains with him, and a speedy ransom, or a cut throat!"

It is curious, to one acquainted with the present state of Milan, to hear an account, like my old friend's, of unpaved, dark streets, where the only illumination was a little lamp glimmering here and there at a corner before the shrine of some Madonna, and where robbery and assassination were the occurrences of nearly every night that threw its mantle over the *duomo**. But so it really was with Milan about the good year —70. The civic mode, or that adopted by the robbers and murderers within the city, was, to throw a large sack over their victims as they hurried along the streets, and then to drag them under the deep, dark portal of some palace, or down some darker lane, where their business was done most expeditiously. The "mouth-plaster," as attributed to our Burkers, would be an insignificant word compared to the "sack" at Milan in those days. The cry of "*sacco ! sacco !*" would throw a whole street, a whole quarter of the city, into the agonies of alarm.

This agreeable state of things lasted as long as the corrupt and imbecile system which had permitted it to gain strength, but when the Archduke Ferdinand came, and a more virtuous and firmer government was established, a speedy end was put to it, and both country and city were restored to order. The advent of that Prince was, in truth, a most fatal occurrence for the Lombard brigands; they were cut to pieces, dispersed, or made prisoners; and in Milan alone Signor C—— saw twenty-four in one day broken on the wheel. The original horrors of this barbarous process of capital execution were, however, abrogated in practice—the criminals were killed first with the executioner's knife, and then broken with the wheel.

* The magnificent Gothic Cathedral of Milan.

As it was, however, the wholesale execution which my friend, then a stripling, had the extraordinary strength of nerve to stand by and witness, from its commencement to its close, had such an effect upon him, that he could eat no dinner for a whole week. I should have wondered if he could!

NEAPOLITAN AND ROMAN BRIGANDS.

SUNDRY ANECDOTES, FACETIOUS AND SERIOUS.

MANY of the stories of the Roman and Neapolitan banditti are far from being of so tragical a nature as those I have related. On the contrary, a jest-book might be filled with very funny stories regarding them. The brigands were often facetious and full of frolicsome tricks, at the not very serious expense of those they waylaid, while at times they were the butts or victims to those who fell in with them.

In the Lent of 1816, as a company of actors, some singers and some comedians, were on their way to one of the small provincial towns on the Adriatic, where they were engaged to play at Easter, their rambling old vettura was stopped by a formidable band. Obeying with all the alacrity their fears and nervousness would permit the command of the robbers to descend and be rifled, a prima donna and a seconda donna, two male tenors and a most masculine basso, came out of the body of the very primeval vehicle, at the same time that a tiranno domestico, a primo amoroso, and a fiddler, the leader of the orchestra, emerged from the head or coupé of the machine. They were almost dead with affright, but as they laid

themselves down by the road side previously to the operation of being rifled of what they had about them, they protested they were only poor virtuosi—that all their trunks contained were certain theatrical dresses of no value to the robbers, whilst their loss would be utter ruin to themselves.

“Cospetto di Bacco—Genti da teatro—theatrical people, bravo!” cried several of the band; “but we must see whether this be all true.”

On unlashing the baggage and opening the poor players’ trunks, the robbers found a very satisfactory confirmation of their statement. The contents principally consisted of a few dirty dresses set off with tawdry and tinsel, an abundance of rouge-pots, and a paucity of chemises, &c., sundry tragical wigs and sundry comic ditto, a Roman toga or so made out of an old red silk curtain, two or three pair of inexpressibles *à la Turque*, and an *habit de gala à la Louis Quatorze*, to be worn by the lover. As for the fiddler, he had nothing but his fiddle-case, wherein lay his mute instrument, flanked by a shirt or two—his wardrobe for the campaign. But in lugging out these valuable “kists” from the carriage, the robbers lugged out something that they thought might prove of more value—it was a little ruddy-faced Englishman, who had been in no hurry to follow the example of his fellow-travellers, but lay *perdu* in one corner of the vettura.

“*Tutti gl’ Inglesi son ricchi *!*” say the Italians, but in the absence of a few millions of Englishmen who might any day offer a melancholy proof to the contrary, the little red-faced man from the corner certainly was one striking exception to what the robbers thought the general rule—our wealth. He was a jolly son of Neptune, with nothing to live upon but a lieutenant’s half-pay and his own good spirits,

* “All the English are rich.”

and, save a silver watch, had not many things of greater price about him than the players. He was as good-humoured a little fellow as ever trod quarter-deck or rode "for cheapness" through Italy with a vetturino, and as he only made a good joke in bad Italian when the robbers took his watch, they left him his purse, (which, from what has been aforesaid, the reader will judge was not a heavy one,) and turned to the players, who still lay with their faces to the ground, telling them to rise and give them a song. The poor virtuosi rose, but they still showed an alarm for their personal safety and the integrity of their goods and chattels.

"*Non abbiate paura,*" (have no fear,) said the captain of the banditti, "you have nothing worth our taking; but it is long since we could recreate ourselves at an opera, so sing us a duetto and an aria or two!"

"Ay, sing us an aria—sing us an aria!" cried the robbers.

Accordingly, after a preliminary hem and spit, the prima donna sang a bravura aria, the close of which was heartily applauded by the banditti, who had beaten time during its progress with the butt-end of their long guns.

Italians never encore. The robbers begged to be favoured with a duetto. One of the tenors joined the prima donna, and a duetto was executed equally to their satisfaction. The robbers had not enjoyed such a treat as this for a long time—they were delighted with it! At the conclusion of the duetto they begged for the grace of a terzetto. The basso joined, and as the fiddler had by this time got his instrument in order, he also struck in with an accompaniment, which tickled the ears of the robbers exceedingly. The audience was rather a curious one. There were the ten or twelve robbers with their high conical hats,

gaudy jackets, and sandalled feet—their d—d (the expression was the lieutenant's) long guns, and knives and pistols in their girdles, and their wild features owning the gentle influence of sound; there were the vetturino and the postilion—the former risen from under the mule's bellies, the latter from before the mule's feet—for such are the posts the brigands assign these functionaries when an attack is made on a vettura—and there was the tough little Englishman with his seal-skin travelling-cap, trim blue frock-coat and Wellingtons—all after a while forgetful of their situations, and occupied by the music and the fun of the moment; for, be it said, *sub rosa*, all the songs were not about *Bell Idol mios*, and *Caro per tes*, but seasoned with salt and smut—perhaps for the gratification of the more vulgar taste of the brigands, perhaps in accordance with that of the singers. When the terzetto was finished, the basso modestly proposed that the brigands should allow them to continue their journey.

“*Da quì cent' anni!*” (a hundred years hence,) cried one or two of the brigand amateurs.

“Not yet—not yet!” said the captain; “here's a fine opera-looking fellow, with a *faccia di musico*, who hasn't favoured us with a single note—we must first have your song!” and he looked in the face of the second tenor, who thought him not a man to be refused.

This warbler, however, had not got beyond his first flourish, when one of the robbers, who had been stationed on the top of a hill near the road, like sister Anne on the tower in Blue-beard, to see if any body was coming, blew a shrill whistle, and presently ran down to tell them he had seen a number of travellers approaching. This intelligence drove the robbers away up the hills towards the woods. Their hurry, however, did not prevent them from thanking the

vocalists, from whom they took not even so much as a bajocco. The players and the postilion soon put up the trunks—the Englishman's light *valise* had never been removed from under the coach-seat, and they were all ready, and drove off laughing at the adventure, before the travellers announced by the sentinel reached the spot. Whether these were wealthy, and well-guarded; whether they were plundered, or whether they were protected by poverty, equal to that of his own party, and got off with a song, the Englishman never learned. He was so much amused with his rencounter, that he used often to tell the story.

Not long after this, as Lady B—— was travelling from Rome to Naples, with rather a numerous suite, she “fell among thieves.” The robbers this time had a tolerably good booty, but there was one excellent laugh against them. Her ladyship's medical attendant had a large medicine chest in the carriage; this was immediately broken open by the robbers, who thought the neat and strong mahogany case must contain jewels or other valuables. They were disappointed, and somewhat puzzled, when they found a number of square crystal bottles, &c. Two of the robbers took out each one of these bottles, whose medicinal contents were liquid and bright—the one like rosolio, the other like maraschina di Zara. The two robbers concluded at once they were nothing else than these favourite liqueurs, or some foreign cordial of a similar nature and excellence; and anxious for the first draught, each put his bottle to his mouth, and did not withdraw it until he had taken a hearty swig. Then, indeed, the bottles were withdrawn, and dashed, with horrible curses, to the earth; and the two rogues, with terror in their countenances, threw themselves on the doctor, in the same breath, threatening to kill him, and begging to know whether they were

poisoned, and he could cure them? The worthy practitioner, who was an Irishman, and as such fond of a joke, would have had here a good opportunity of indulging in one, by making the trembling fellows believe for a while that they had swallowed some infernal poison, worse than the *acqua tophana*; but under circumstances, and in the presence of armed banditti, he thought it more prudent to tell them that they had only swallowed a little medicine, which could do them no harm, however badly it might taste, and to reserve his laugh at them for taking his physic for sweet waters, till a more convenient opportunity.

In the next little anecdote, another brigand of another band cut a still more ridiculous figure. My friend Mr. W——, a merchant of Naples, was travelling post with a Swiss merchant, and had nearly reached the city of Capua, which is only about fourteen miles from Naples, when his carriage was suddenly stopped. It was night, but a beautiful moon—the moon of Naples, which, as the witty Marchese Caraccioli used to say, was worth a London sun, illuminated the scene, and allowed W—— to see that there were only three or four brigands near the coach, and that they had not yet knocked the postilion off the horses. W—— took his measures accordingly with great presence of mind and boldness. As the foremost brigand came to the side of the carriage, within reach, bawling and cursing for those within to come out and be robbed, he caught hold of the ruffian by the breasts of his jacket, and called out to the postilion to gallop off for Capua, where he should be well rewarded. The postilion, who had known him before on the road, took W—— at his word, and, with a boldness rarely found in his class, whipped his horses, that went off, (as Neapolitan horses generally will do,) “an end.” As the postilion’s whip touched the withers of his steeds, a bullet whizzed past his

head, but missed its aim. Away then went the carriage and the merchants and the robber as swift as the old witches in Goëthe's Faustus; W——, who was a robust man, keeping a firm hold of the robber, who dangled—his head and shoulders in, and the rest of his body outside of the vehicle,—like a lamb or a calf over a butcher's cart. W——'s companion occasionally assisted him. After numerous but vain struggles to extricate himself from their grasp, the captured brigand, whose legs were bruised in the cruelest manner against the rapid carriage wheels, and his breath almost bumped out of his body, protested it was all a mistake, and begged most piteously to be released. The merchants, however, kept the prize they had made in so curious a manner, and soon arrived at Capua. This being a fortified town, most awkwardly for travellers, placed on the high road, they had to wait some time until a letter was sent to the commandant, and permission obtained to admit them. When the drawbridge was lowered, they rolled over it, with the robber still dangling at the coach-side, and delivered him at the guard-house. The next morning the merchants appeared before the justice of peace, and after their depositions had been received, the brigand was given over to the civil authorities, and cast into prison, where he lay for many months, without being brought to judgment. What finally became of him I know not; but I remember very well, that my friend W——, though he was rather proud of the novel exploit, had so much trouble in consequence of it, and the somewhat peculiar course of Neapolitan justice, that he used often to wish he had left the fellow in the road.

The next of my concluding anecdotes of Italian banditti on which I lay my hand, is of a more tragical nature.

“ In the month of March 1817*,” says a popular Author of Travels, “ I was out with one of my friends on a shooting party near Aquila, when I heard the farmers talking of robberies without number committed by the troop of *The Independence*. There was much talent, and a Turkish bravery, shown in the manner in which they were achieved. I paid little attention to all this, robberies in these parts are so common; I was all eyes to observe the manners of the people. I gave some money to a poor woman who was with child, and who, I was told, was a soldier’s widow, when one said to me : “ Oh, Sir, she is not to be pitied, she has the ration of the banditti,” and they went on to give me the following detail :—

“ ‘ There is in this country a company of thirty men and four women, all mounted in a superior manner upon blood-horses. This band calls itself the troop of *The Independence*; its chief is a former *Marechal-de-logis* of king Joachim†. He orders such a landlord, or such a farmer, to put such a sum of money, on such a day, at the foot of such a tree; if not, he himself will be murdered and his house set on fire. When this troop are on the march, they send orders the day before to all the farmers on their route, to have a repast ready at such an hour, for so many persons, the best that their means will afford. This service is more regularly performed than the provision for the royal household in its progress through the country.’

“ About a month before I received this detail, a farmer, being piqued at the imperious manner in which the repast was ordered, sent information of it to the general, and the *Independents* were surrounded by a

* Rome, Naples, and Florence in 1817, by (a fictitious name) the Count de Stendhal. The Author’s real name is Beyle.

† Murat.

numerous, band of infantry and cavalry; they fought their way through, covering the ground with the dead bodies of the soldiers, while not one of their own party fell. Learning the treachery of the farmer, they sent notice to him to settle his affairs. Three days after they took possession of the farm, where they instituted a tribunal, and the farmer, being put to the torture, confessed every thing. After deliberating together awhile in secret, they approached the unhappy farmer, and threw him into a large caldron which was upon the fire, full of milk for making cheese. When he had boiled there for some time, they forced all the servants to eat of this infernal banquet.

“The chief could easily increase his troop to a thousand men; but he says that his talents for command will not go beyond a band of thirty, and he restrains himself to keeping up this number. He receives daily applications from people to be received into the band; but he requires a title, that is, wounds received in the field of battle, not certificates given from complaisance:—these are his very words.

“This spring, the peasants of these parts suffered very much from scarcity. The chief of the Independents distributed among the sufferers tickets upon the rich. The rations were a pound and a half of bread for a man, a pound for a woman, and two pounds for a woman with child. The woman, who excited my curiosity, had for a month received six of these tickets in the week for two pounds of bread each. For the rest, no one ever knows where the band are to be found, they get all the spies on their side. In the time of the Romans this chief of banditti would have been a Marcellus.”

Though there is a little exaggeration in this account, the main points are correct, more particularly that which regards the robbers' provident care of the poor.

“*Ho fatto più carità,*” (I have done more acts of charity,) said one of these brigands, when he fell into the hands of the law, “than any three convents in these provinces!” And so, perhaps, he had, and at as little cost to himself as the monks, who beg themselves (as he had stolen) from others, what they live upon and give to beggars.

Though the “*Independenti*” may have been averse to increase their band with men, they seem to have been anxious to recruit it with women, for at the end of 1817, as I was crossing the range of mountains above Sora, that separates the Garigliano from the lake of Celano, in the Abruzzi, I heard the following event, at a little village where I stopped to refresh myself.

A pretty girl of the place, betrothed to a respectable young farmer, was carried off by the robbers as she was going with an old female relative to early morning mass at a chapel on the skirts of the village. The alarm was instantly spread, and a pursuit undertaken by all the fair captive’s relatives and friends, with the agonised lover at their head. After scouring the country for several hours, without finding any trace of the brigands, many of the pursuing party, through fatigue and dread of advancing farther into the mountains towards the place where they had reason to apprehend the band was collected in force, hung back, and talked of returning home. The desperate lover would not pause a moment, but still hurried forward with a braver or more deeply interested few. But even these few, one by one, abandoned what seemed so hopeless or desperate a chase, or, unable to keep up with the speed of the active, young lover, followed him trembling and panting at a distance.

He was alone, and far a-head of them, when he heard a shriek. Flying in the direction of the sound, he soon came to a wooded hollow, where he saw through the boles of the trees his affianced struggling

in the arms of a desperate-looking ruffian. Such a moment, to a bold young lover, was not a moment for hesitation or calculation,—he glided through the trees, and before the robber could seize his carbine, which lay only a few feet from the spot where his struggling victim had dragged him—almost before the robber could draw his dagger, he ran his sword home to his heart. The released girl threw herself into her lover's arms; but there was yet work to do ere he could resign himself to his transports. A second brigand, who had been stationed at the edge of the wood to keep watch, heard the shout of the lover as he made his assault, and the curse of his comrade or superior as he fell beneath it, and now rushed to the spot, with that brigand yell which the poor peasantry so much dread. The young man, with his weeping mistress still hanging on his neck, drew behind a tree—he had the advantage of a trifling elevation in his favour, and as the robber had his last step on this, and came close to him, he suddenly turned round the tree, put his foot on the fallen ruffian, who still murmured in his throat, and with a pistol shot the second villain through the body. Supporting and caressing the dear girl his valour had so opportunely liberated, he then made all the haste he could out of the hollow, and soon came in sight of the few friends who had followed him thus far, and of whom some had been brought to a stand still, and others put to a retrograde flight by the report of his pistol in the wood. The unexpected sight, and the triumphant shouts of the lover with his recovered affianced one, brought them, however, speedily together, and they returned to the village with more joy than they hoped for when they set out from it on their pursuit.

The band of the “Independenti” was destroyed a few months after this event.

One of the boldest deeds of resistance to the

brigands was performed by a Major on Murat's staff, a native of one of the German cantons of Switzerland, or from the confederacy of the Rhine, I forget which. His name, I think I can remember, was Vollf. This officer was travelling post from Naples to Rome with despatches, in a little, low, open caleche : he had not even a servant with him. In the Pontine Marshes he was stopped by six sturdy and well-armed brigands. Expecting no resistance from a single man, the robbers stood by the door of the carriage uttering tremendous curses and commanding him to descend. This he presently did ; but as he left his seat he grasped a ready brace of pistols, and crossed his arms under his military cloak ; and as he touched the ground he pressed a trigger on either side of him, and two of the brigands, who were almost in contact with his person, fell dead by the carriage. His sabre was as ready as his pistols—with it he cleft the head of one robber who fell, and wounded another, who then, with his two unhurt but terrified companions, took to flight, and left the officer the master of the field.

The unluckiest thing the Neapolitan and Roman banditti about the frontiers did in my time was to take an Austrian Colonel, on the staff of General Frimont, then Commander-in-Chief at Naples. They carried this officer to the mountains, where they kept him many days, which I have heard him describe as days of continual alarm and horror, and at last procured a good ransom for him. But a dreadful vengeance followed close on this compliance, which had been necessitated by consideration for the safety of the Colonel, whom the ruffians would most assuredly have murdered, had the ransom not been paid. Old Frimont sent nearly his whole force of jagers, or light troops, against them. Measures were concerted with the Papal Government. The Au-

strians were allowed free ingress into the Roman States; and they hunted the brigands in the mountains from place to place, with a most persevering activity. The shepherds and other peasants were seized, and forced to act as guides. The enraged Austrians were not restrained by many scruples. Wherever they found men with arms, they shot them: in some instances they burned down whole villages. The wives of the brigands, in the course of these tragical visitations, in several instances displayed a heroism worthy of ancient Roman matrons, and the soldiery were obliged to deal with them as though they had been men. An officer of jagers, with whom I was acquainted, was shot in the shoulder, from behind a rock, by one of these heroines, who, when made prisoner, and threatened with instant death unless she showed the track of the brigands, clenched her fist, and said, looking at the rock from which they had dragged her, "Unbaptised dogs that ye are! you may as well attempt to make those stones speak, as to make me divulge where are my husband, my brother, and my friends!" And even when the jagers levelled their rifles and put their fingers to the trigger, not a word could they force from the woman, who muttered something to herself, as though a prayer to the Madonna, or her guardian saint.

There is very little doubt that the Austrians shot many a poor mountaineer that was no robber, but they certainly succeeded in putting down the banditti, who from that time (in 1824) never recovered their former importance and audacity, until the recent political troubles in Romagna.

The Austrians did not, however, achieve this without tremendous sufferings and losses. Frimont thought proper to keep forces in the lawless country he had purged. Those in the mountains fared pretty

well, but the ranks of the poor jagers in the valley of the Garigliano, and in other low, marshy places, where they were stationed nearly a whole summer, were awfully thinned by malaria fevers of peculiar malignity. I had myself seen some time before, in the Abruzzi, a fine battalion of this truly excellent branch of the Austrian army; it was composed almost entirely of Bohemians, young and florid men. I met the same battalion at the end of this year, and found one half of it dead or in the hospital! I inquired after three of the officers to whom I had been indebted for much civility while travelling, and was told that one of them, a noble young fellow of three or four and twenty, had left his bones by the banks of the Garigliano; the other two were gone to the hospital at Naples. This is something much worse than dying in the "deadly breach," or on the field of battle, where, at least, (if they do not misspell our names,) we may have the honour of ornamenting a Gazette of victory or glory!

It was about this time, that I, who had twice gone safely through the pass of Bovino, even when those Coryphæi of banditti, the Vardarelli, were at the plenitude of their power, and who for seven years (in which I by no means led a sedentary or fixed life) had always escaped falling into the hands of a respectable band of brigands, fell unluckily under the clutches of a contemptible gang of novices and bunglers.

My friend, the Prince D'I——, whose meritorious and (for his country) rare exertions to improve his estates I have mentioned in an early part of this volume, had also undertaken to drain an immense extent of land he held between the mouth of the river Voltorno and the lake of Patria—an enterprise in which, to the disgrace of his wealthy but unenterprising relations, and of the imbecile Government of

the time, which, instead of encouraging, thwarted him, he was left to fail and to ruin his fortune. The place was only some fifteen miles from the capital, and whilst the labours of digging canals and making embankments were in full activity, the Prince was accustomed to go down three or four times in the week, carrying money on the Saturday to pay the labourers. I accompanied him very frequently. It was imprudent, no doubt, but, though the Prince had a good number of armed *guardiani* in his service, we always went without an escort, and frequently without arms. Our road, after leaving the town of Pozzuoli, was chiefly through a solitary and wild country that bore rather a bad character; but no robberies had been heard of for a long time, and from the constant employment he gave to so many of the neighbouring peasantry, my friend might deem himself a popular character. In short, we had fifty times made the journey, and with good sums of money, without any *mauvaise rencontre*, and thought we never should meet any, when early one fine spring morning, as we were driving in a little drosky, over a rough and narrow road that ran through fields of lupins, which in that climate grow to the height of six or seven feet, I was cut short in a story I was telling, by having a long gun put to my breast by a fellow who had been concealed in the lupin-field. At the same instant my friend received the same compliment, and our driver, a boy of fourteen or fifteen, who was riding *en postillon*, was knocked off his horse. We had each a pistol and no more in the carriage, and these we had to draw from under the apron. My friend moved his arm to catch his,—I was disengaging my arm from my cloak to do the same, when with the eye of a military man he glanced at the fellows' guns, which almost touched our breasts, and saw they were full cocked. There

was no chance—we had to draw our pistols from the pockets of the carriage and to cock them—and the robbers were swearing they would fire into our hearts, if we did not put our hands out of the carriage and instantly descend. Had we hesitated, of a certainty they would have shot us both from very fear, for, as we afterwards learned, they knew very well the Prince had pistols with him, and only a few days before we had been amusing ourselves on the estate by firing at a mark, when he, as a good shot, rather surprised the country people from whom the rogues had in all probability heard of his address. Whatever I might have done, he would not have missed his aim at twenty paces—but they were only their muskets' length from us. As it was, however, our case was hopeless, and bidding me, in English, which he spoke very well, step out of the carriage, and say nothing to the ruffians, he asked them what they would of him. "Your money, you robber! you infamous assassin!" was the reply of these honest men, who indeed kept up their courage, all the time they were with us and robbing us, by calling us these names and others, which those who know the low Neapolitans may fancy, but which I may not repeat.

"Take it," said the Prince, pointing to the canvass bags that lay at his feet, "Take it, and go to the devil!" He was a fine, athletic, commanding figure of a man, and well known to be a brave one—even then, completely in their power as he was, they were afraid to approach him to take the money, and insisted, with the most horrible oaths, that he should descend, or they would fire upon him. The fellow who seemed to be the leader of the enterprise had his finger on his trigger. I, who was standing by the road-side with an ugly gun still at my breast, now thought it time to say, "For heaven's sake come down." My

friend stepped out of the carriage, and again told them to take the money and be off. But now, though a novice in his profession, one of the robbers, insisting on the *faccia-in-terra* ceremony, swore he would shoot us unless we lay down with our faces to the ground. This we would not do. In the next instant, the villain who had approached the carriage cried, "*Ecco le pistole!*—Here are the pistols—it's all right—never mind now!" and, taking out the brace, he threw away the priming, and, after dragging them, with their pans open, through the wet grass, he then threw them into the bottom of the carriage, and drew out the money, which was contained in two canvass bags.

All the while this was performing, the fellow who stood guard over me trembled with agitation: he shook, indeed, to such a degree, that knowing, as I well did, the crazy nature of guns of common Neapolitan manufacture, and seeing his close to my body and ready to go off, I apprehended the bungler would shoot me without intending it—and once requested he would take it from my breast, as I was unarmed and could make no resistance.

When the money had been thrown in among the tall lupins, with a repetition of the pretty epithets they had already honoured us with, they lifted up the poor boy, who was almost dead with affright, from before the horses' heads, and made us get into the carriage and drive on. They swore they would shoot us if we looked back. This, however, we did when at a short distance, and saw them mount their horses, which had been concealed from us in the thick high lupin-field, and strike across the country.

The scene of the robbery was little more than a mile from the estate, where the Prince, at the time, had several hundred men at work, and thither we now drove at a gallop.

The loss had been a heavy one—for, owing to his not

having made his payments to the labourers the preceding week, my friend had three thousand Neapolitan ducats, or five hundred pounds, with him in the bags. The robbers never touched our persons, or said a word about our delivering what we had in our pockets. Had they done so, I should have lost only a few dollars in silver and a watch of slight value, but they would have found on the Prince rather a heavy purse of gold and a very valuable watch.

We soon reached the estate, where my friend, who had repressed his mortification and anger, gave them full vent, when a silly old man in his service as a sort of factor, recommended, as the first thing essential in such a case, that we should both get bled, to obviate the effects resulting from sudden alarm. This is a common Neapolitan practice, but, I believe, besides my friend's burst of rage and contempt, I stormed at the old fool as well, for proposing it in our case. We were presently on horseback with a formidable posse of *guardiani*, *fattori*, and *scrivani*, all mounted and well armed, and, dividing into different parties, scoured the country in pursuit of the robbers.

From the solitude and wildness of the country, which for the greater part is covered by *pantani* or marshes, lakes, and almost impenetrable woods, we had slight hopes, when we set out, of catching them. Yet, from the shortness of the time that had elapsed, and the speed at which we rode, we were close upon them, and at one time fancied we should catch them, for we fell in with a poor old peasant woman, who had just seen four men dividing two bags of money, which they were probably doing thus early for the convenience of carrying it—two thousand five hundred ducats, in silver, in each bag, being a good weight. Encouraged by this information, we galloped on. Smarting as we were under the recent outrage, had we caught the robbers, I am confident we should have

taken justice into our own hands, and shot them, without waiting for the tardy decisions of the courts—but, alas! we were not so fortunate. We hunted, in vain, through a complete labyrinth of cross-roads or rather paths, beat several woods, and interrogated several shepherds, in vain, and were at last obliged to return to our canal-digging and embankments, with our original loss—and with our revenge ungratified.

When we returned to Naples that night, we had the consolation of hearing from all the friends we met, “I told you so!—I knew how it would be!—I wonder you haven’t been both murdered long ago, going with money through that cut-throat country!” Some also talked about bleeding—but, in a metaphorical sense, surely my friend had been bled enough!

When we had dined we went to the Minister of Police, who was, where every Neapolitan who can afford it is at that time of the night, at the Opera. We went there too. The next morning, however, the Prince saw the man in authority, who engaged that nothing should be neglected for the detection and arrest of the offenders. We were pretty certain that these men were not regular robbers, and that they belonged to the immediate neighbourhood of the estate. We had yet another clue—by a very extraordinary circumstance, all the money was in two-carlin pieces (in value about eight-pence each), and, by tracing a sudden influx of this particular coin in any of the little towns or villages, a discovery might be made.

To be brief, in about a fortnight four men were arrested and thrown into the prison of the Vicaria at Naples. Some six weeks after their arrest, the Prince, myself, and the boy who was driving us, were summoned to that prison, and asked if we could recognise the men if they were shown us. My friend and myself both confidently affirmed that we could, for we

had marked them well during our short interview. The boy was less confident.

The Prince was then conducted into a hall in the prison, leaving me and the boy together. In a few minutes a gaoler returned without the Prince, and desired me to follow him, which I did, leaving the boy alone. I was ushered into a dark dirty apartment, where a dozen or fifteen ruffianly-looking fellows were ranged in a line, and was told to point out among them the perpetrators of the robbery. Being short-sighted, I went close up to this villanous file, and as soon as my eye became accustomed to the faulty light of the place, I pointed out one of my *ci-devant* calumniators.

“Touch him with your hand,” cried a little man in the corner, who was noting down what passed.

I laid my hand on the ruffian, who said with a bold enough laugh, “*Ah! Signor mio, l’ avete sbagliato gruosso!*” (Ah, Sir! you have made a gross mistake) But when I laid my hand on a second, I saw that fellow’s countenance change, and that he could scarcely avoid shrinking from my touch. When my recognition was finished, I was removed to another room and left alone, and the boy was called in. When the boy had picked out his men, they brought him into the room where I was, and then led us to the Prince. It appeared that my friend, and myself, and the boy had selected the same individuals, only that the boy had at first been in doubt as to one of them.

On the strength of such evidence as this alone, one might have hoped for a speedy and decisive trial. But we were at Naples! I heard nothing more of the robbers for some months, when I was called to attend a trial, which, when I went to the court, I found, without learning why, was postponed.

In this interim there had been some talk in the neighbourhood, and even on the estate, that vengeance

would be taken on us by the robbers' kinsmen and friends, for maliciously detaining in prison innocent, unfortunate men, which said individuals turned out to be, as we expected, of those parts, and acquainted with the circumstance that the Prince carried good sums of money there every Saturday. For a month or so we had an escort of *guardiani*, but then went and came alone as before, frequently travelling in the darkness of night. I am fain to confess that at first, whenever I saw fellows skulking along the solitary roads with long guns in their hands, (which happened rather frequently, as, spite of the prohibition of Government, nearly every peasant had his gun in that wild district,) I felt rather uncomfortable, and took care, at least, that my pistol should not be under the apron and uncocked. But this wore off, and we never heard of the prisoners' kinsmen and friends.

It was nearly two years after the offence that I was again summoned to the Vicaria. This time the trial really began; but there were only three prisoners produced,—the fourth had contracted a disease and died in the prison! Had I met either of these men in the pursuit when my blood was hot, I should most assuredly have had the heart to blow his brains out. At the moment I was first confronted with them in prison, I might have borne to see one or two of them hanged; but after this long interval, in which one of them had died in a dungeon; in which I had been occupied by so many other thoughts, and feelings, and pursuits; in which, on the whole, I had enjoyed so much, and the three men, in whose hands my life had been, now crouching before me, emaciated and broken by their long and rigorous confinement, had suffered so much, I am sure, had I been able, I would have opened their prison doors and set them free. I felt sick at heart when I had to make my deposition.

One of the curious features in this extraordinary

trial was, that I was never put to my oath; for when it came to that test, the presiding judge, who knew very little of me, said that my word as an Englishman and a gentleman was enough! The compliment did not prevent my astonishment at the time, and my reference in my own mind to the modes of criminal procedure in my own country. My being a Protestant, I fancy, could have nothing to do in the matter; and indeed in more than one instance I had been put to my oath in the kingdom of Naples before the health officers, on arriving at a Lazzaretto.

Besides my evidence, which I thought was full and decisive, there was that of the boy and of several other witnesses, including the old woman. When I thought sentence was going to be pronounced, the court broke up, and the prisoners were remanded. I stayed at Naples five or six months longer without hearing anything more of the robbers; what became of them I know not, for at the end of that period I quitted the country and transferred myself to a land where justice is much more summary—I mean Turkey.

It was said by many of the Neapolitans at the time, that the robbers, who had been taken long before they could possibly spend so considerable a sum, (a fortune almost to men of their condition in that country!) had made good use of it in delaying the law's severity. What I know is, that my friend never saw a carlin of his three thousand ducats.

But what I know also is, the proneness of the Neapolitans to speak ill of each other, and to vituperate their own Government. I have, moreover, lived too many years in that country, to adopt the sweeping prejudices of hasty and unexamining travellers, or to believe all or even a tithe of what is asserted against the Italians generally; still, however, the facts were such as I have represented them, and the comments

they must provoke, in whatever way we look at them, cannot be otherwise than most unfavourable to the criminal courts of Naples.

That beautiful country has now a new and a young King, who has, it is said, already effected many salutary reforms; let us hope he has directed or will direct his attention to the proper administration of justice, which will be a greater benefit to the Neapolitans, than, under circumstances, their Spanish Constitution could have proved.

And now good night to Italian brigands, and once more farewell to Italy!—a country where my brightest days have been passed, for I can never hope to retrace the pleasant period of life between seventeen years and twenty-seven—a country for which I may assert a heart-warm admiration, knowing it and living in it so long as I have done, without, I trust, incurring the suspicion of sentimentalism or affectation—a country where I have had, and am confident still have, some of my best friends, and where, next to my native land, I should prefer to end my life, and find, with—

“ Un sasso
Che distingue le mie dalle infinite
Ossa che in terra e in mar semina morte,” *

a quiet and a humble grave.

SICILIAN BRIGANDS.

THE beautiful island of Sicily, which has generally had the fortune to be as badly governed as southern Italy—almost as often subjected to foreign invasion and conquest, also abounds, like Calabria, on the op-

* Ugo Foscolo. I Sepolchri.

posite side of the Faro, in mountains of most difficult access, and wild swamps, once fertile plains, that aided the island in its acquisition of its proud title of "The Granary of Rome," and has consequently abounded with banditti and men of the most desperate characters. Save in one solitary instance, there is little, however, in the lives of the Sicilian robbers, different from those of their near neighbours the Calabrians. Their mode of plundering, their places of retreat, their general habits of life were the same; but they have not been so fortunate as the Continental freebooters, in having good narrators of their exploits, nor have I been so lucky as to find one good eye-witness account of them.

The first of the two anecdotes I have selected came to me in the way of oral tradition, and the name of the hero has escaped me.

The peculiarity of this Sicilian robber's case is, that he did everything single-handed—he commanded no band, but *mannequins*, or large puppets the size of life, made and dressed up by himself, were his passive but effective satellites. He must have been an artist of considerable ingenuity, for his figures were perfect as far as brigand costume and ferocity of expression went. Their eyes were large and staring, their whiskers most tremendous, and their mouths, of course, were never seen to relax with a smile of good-nature.

His plan of operation was simply this. He set up his puppets against a bank or hillock by some rough road-side, or among bushes or thickets hanging over the road—he contrived to make them hold long guns pointed down on the road, and their daggers and *couteaux de chasse* were visible in their bosoms or girdles. His position was always chosen where the road or mountain-path (for there was nothing in the interior of the island deserving the name of road) was broken

and tortuous, and where passengers would come suddenly in view of his troop and be covered by their musketry at the turn of a corner. While they remained more immovable than even Austrian sentinels at their post, he kept a sharp look-out from a point whence he could see the approaches by the road on both sides. If the travellers were numerous and well-armed, he withdrew his men, like a prudent commander, and hid them and himself in the thicket; but if those who approached were less formidable, he placed himself by the side of his steady troop, and when the timid wayfarers popped upon the appalling spectacle of their fierce faces, and murderous guns that seemed just going to be fired at them, he rushed upon them, well-armed as he always was, and made them perform the "*faccia in terra*" evolution, which they readily did, under the impression that they would be shot by the figures on the road-side if they disobeyed. He then made them give up their money or what moveable things of value they might have with them; and this also they did with promptitude, thinking a whole band of robbers kept guard over them. As soon as this agreeable operation was performed, he ordered them to rise and return the way they had come, swearing, by the most tremendous oaths, that he among them who should dare to look back, was a dead man!

When the despoiled had parted, he relieved his guard, carried off and concealed his never murmuring adherents, until he should again think proper to take the field, and instead of dividing the spoils with greedy comrades, he put them all into his own pocket.

Numerous were the robberies committed by the solitary Sicilian in this ingenious manner, and as he was continually changing his scene of action, the whole island soon rang with the fame of his formidable band. Yet, do what they would, Government could

never trace them. Even when, as at times it happened, a military force was in the neighbourhood of the place where the depredation was committed, and sent in pursuit with the greatest alacrity, they never could come up with the banditti. Nor could promises or threats, or actual violence and torture, ever extract from the shepherds or the peasantry, scattered about spots supposed likely to be their haunts, a confession that they had ever supplied the dangerous band with food—had ever even seen them. It may well be conceived that the pardon of accomplices and rewards offered to such of the band as would return to society, and “turn King’s evidence” (as our Newgate phrase goes), were all thrown away, and that none of the robber’s gang would betray him.

The trick, however, was detected at last. One day a considerable armed force came so suddenly upon the ingenious chief, who had not, perhaps, chosen his spot with his usual felicity, that he had not time to withdraw his faithful adherents, before the *cacciatori*, or sharpshooters, were in front of them, and within rifle-shot, summoning them to surrender.

“Lay down your arms, and submit,” cried the captain of the troop, “and no evil shall befall you from us—justice will deal with you, and our Government is merciful!”

There was no answer returned, and, as the officer saw the robbers’ guns still levelled at him and his men, he gave the word of command.

“Present arms!”

The *cacciatori* levelled their rifles, but to their surprise the robbers neither spoke nor retreated, nor dipped behind the bushes, but stood there like targets to be shot at.

“Fire!” cried the captain.

The soldiers discharged their pieces. One of the robbers fell, another staggered, and remained declining

from the perpendicular, but the others were as fixed as before, and to the no small surprise of the soldiers did not even return their fire.

The captain and his men thought they were entranced—fixed by a spell, or else planning some desperate manœuvre; nor did they fire again, until they had well looked to their flanks and rear, expecting an ambushed attack by others of this Pythagorean band.

At the second volley three more of the robbers fell, and then the soldiers boldly rushed forward to the thicket—when they had the satisfaction to find that they had been kept in awe by puppets, and had been firing at jackets and breeches stuffed with straw, two of which fierce figures, still alert, seemed to defy them to do their worst!

The mover of the *marionnette* bandits had meanwhile made good his escape, but he was caught some time after the destruction of his band, in the commission of some paltry footpad robbery, and sent to the galleys, where he used afterwards to amuse his companions in captivity by relating his wonderful exploits as capobandito, or robber-chief.

The second anecdote is worth slight mention.

A friend of mine, a young English merchant, tolerably well acquainted with Sicily and its language, travelling some years ago in the interior of the island, had to pass a place that for some months had enjoyed a disagreeable notoriety as being frequented by an association that levied contributions on the road, and occasionally forgot that commandment which saith “Thou shalt do no murder.” About the hour of noon he reached a solitary taverna on the side of a lofty mountain, and here, though he knew it was the very worst place on his journey, he was obliged to stop to rest his tired mules. Making a virtue of necessity, my friend followed the very sinister-looking Boniface

of the miserable inn to a little room, where a table was soon spread for him. The house afforded nothing but eggs, garlic, a little maccaroni, some sour bread, and sourer wine; but, like an experienced traveller, he had brought a good basket with him, and this being handed in, he began to make a hearty meal. He was considerably advanced in this pleasant operation, and, having swallowed a glass or two of generous Faro wine, was becoming very indifferent to banditti and the dangers of the road, when he was startled by a loud fierce voice speaking outside of the inn. He ran to the window, but, on looking out, he only saw his muleteer, who had evidently been disturbed in a slumber, rubbing his eyes, and the brawny back of a tall man who was gliding into the house. He thought the latter might be the landlord, and returned to his seat and table, but, before he could carry the next morsel to his mouth, he heard heavy footsteps approaching the door—in the next moment, the door flew open, and a man of almost gigantic stature, with a long gun in his hand, a brace of pistols and a long knife in his girdle, entered the room. My friend started up. The intruder eyed him from head to foot, and his countenance, before none of the mildest, now relaxed, and he said, “Oh! you are an Englishman, are you?—Pray don’t let me disturb you.” He was about to turn out of the room when my friend, recovering his presence of mind, paid him the compliment, never omitted in Sicily or the South of Italy, when one is found eating, of inviting him to partake with him. The intruder declined, but my friend, not confining himself to a mere empty compliment (and among the Sicilians and Neapolitans it is no more) pressed him to share his meal, and the stranger, placing his long gun by his side, sat down.

He declined partaking of a pasticchio, or meat-pie, because it was a fast day, but accepted of some good

biscuit and English cheese, which he declared to be excellent, and drank freely enough of the Faro wine.

By degrees, the two became very sociable. They talked about the English army that had been in Sicily, (almost the only place I have had the fortune to visit, where the English have left grateful hearts behind them;) then of the Neapolitans, whom the stranger of course hated; then of one thing, and then of another, until my friend alluded to the state of the roads and the banditti.

“You are safe from them,” said the stranger, touching my friend’s glass with his own, “take my word for that! I am their chief—Don Cesare!”

My friend, though he had some slight suspicion or misgiving, concealed his emotion as much as he could, and even went so far as to mutter the formula of politeness—that he was much honoured in making his acquaintance. He could not, however, conceal his real feelings from the quick-eyed Sicilian, who said, as though his delicacy was hurt by his suspicion, “*Signor, mi fate torto*: Sir, you wrong me; I would not, for the wealth of all Palermo, hurt a hair of your head, or take from you, without your free will, so much as this bit of biscuit. I have served your countrymen—I wish they were back again. I have eaten their bread, and, though circumstances have made me what I am, I will continue to be the friend of every Englishman I meet.”

Quite tranquillised by these words, and the earnest manner in which the brigand uttered them, my friend gave appropriate thanks, and then made free to ask what were the circumstances that had driven him to such a dangerous profession. The robber replied without any shyness.

It appeared that Don Cesare was one of those Sicilians who, when the Neapolitans made their revolution in 1820, aimed at still further changes, or at

rendering their island independent of the continental kingdom to which it has been so long linked. These men, who were very numerous, would hear nothing of the benefits of that constitution which their fellow subjects, the Neapolitans, without knowing what it was, had adopted from the Spaniards, but insisted on separating from them and erecting Sicily into one independent State, with a King and constitution of its own. In attempting to effect this, much crime and cruelty were committed, much blood was shed; and, be it said in justice, considerable determination and valour shown by the lower order of the Sicilians, particularly at Palermo, where for some time they kept at bay a whole Neapolitan army, commanded by General Florestan Pepe, a brother to, but an abler man than, William Pepe, the hero of Rieti. The Sicilian patriots, however, could not succeed; and, not many months after, when the Neapolitan Constitution was "whistled down the wind," and old King Ferdinand reprinted, that Sovereign thought fit to investigate the offences of his Sicilian subjects. Some were arrested and thrown into prison; some hid themselves, and some, among whom was my friend's acquaintance, Don Cesare, fled to the mountains, and turned brigands.

When my friend's curiosity was satisfied on this head, he ventured to express his surprise at the liberty of range the robber allowed himself, and to ask if he were not afraid the people of the country would lay hands on him? To this, Don Cesare said, that besides his own gun and knife, he had always the arms of others near him; that in a minute he could surround the house where they were with his trusty followers; and that as to the country people, they knew their own interests too well to interfere with those who never harmed them, and who, after all, were nothing less than unfortunate honest men

that had attempted to rid the island of the Neapolitans.

By this time my friend's refreshed mules were at the door of the hostel; so, thanking Don Cesare for his civility and communicativeness, as that preparatory step to every departure from an inn, he called the ill-looking Boniface for his bill. The host only followed the usual practice, by asking a young Englishman somewhat more than double what he would have asked a Sicilian. My friend, without a remark, drew out his purse: the robber snatched it from him, and shut it up in his broad, horny hand. "*Non Signor! non sara mai!* No, Sir, this shall never be—the account is not just," said he; and then turning to the host, he bade him have a conscience, and not assassinate a stranger, and an Englishman, in that way.

The inn-keeper muttered something: my friend, who did not wish to have words about what after all was a mere trifle, not amounting to more than five or six shillings, begged for his purse, that he might pay the demand; but the robber would suffer no such thing, and still clenching the money in his fist, he turned again to Boniface, and said, he would *fare il conto*, or make the bill.

This accordingly he did, marking the articles, such as "a feed for two mules," "ditto for one muleteer," "bread," "fried eggs," &c. on his fingers, and then putting the precise price to each, he summed up a total which might have met the approbation of even Joseph Hume, Esq., M.P. He next counted out the money into the palm of the host, who seemed not to dare to make any other remark, and twisting up my friend's purse as though it was never more to be opened, he restored it to him with a short piece of Italian advice to be more careful of its contents.

At the inn door he helped my friend to mount his

mule, and when he offered him his hand, and would have bidden him farewell, the robber whispered—“No, we must not part company so soon; there are others may meet you between this and the next town; I will see you in safety.”

They then went on, the robber striding by the side of my friend's mule, and talking all the way in a cheerful tone. They had not gone much more than a mile when three wild-looking fellows were seen descending from the mountain side towards the road, which there ran through a deep winding hollow. As these men approached, they called on the travellers to stop, and had levelled their guns at them, when Don Cesare, who had been concealed from them by the mule, and the person of my friend, stepped forward in the road, showed himself, waved his hand backward, and cried out in a voice like thunder, “*In dietro, canaglia! iddi sun amici! Santu Diavoluni*! in dietro!*” or, “Back you blackguards, these are friends! Saint Devil! get ye back!” The three ruffians recovered their guns, threw them over their shoulders, and without saying a word returned up the mountain.

The robber-chief took no notice of what had happened, but walking a little ahead of the mules that he might be seen, continued in conversation on indifferent subjects until they came to a fair piece of newly-made road, inclosed on either side by magnificent hedges (common things in Sicily and Calabria,) composed of the gigantic aloes, Indian-fig plants, and high flowering geraniums. “Here you are safe,” said the robber, grasping my friend's hand;

* I do not know why, but the Sicilians and Calabrians have made his Satanic Majesty a Saint. *Santu diavolu*, with its augmentative *Santu diavoluni*, is continually in the mouth of both. It is as much their habitual oath as certain two monosyllables are those of the English.

“this road winds round the hill to the town of San Giovanni, and here we must part!”

“Yes,” said the muleteer, addressing my friend, “Yes, Don Giorgio, it is only a quarter of an hour to San Giovanni!”

“Don Giorgio!” said the outlaw: “is that your name? It is the name of your King, whom I have served! *Addio Don Giorgio! che la Madonna vi accompagni!* (May the blessed Virgin go with you),” and giving a last friendly squeeze to my friend’s hand, he turned back, shouting as he went, “*Viva il Re Giorgio!*” Long live King George!

He had not been gone many minutes, when my friend heard one of those long shrill whistles which the Sicilians and Calabrians are particularly expert in producing, by applying their fingers to their tongue and lips. The young Englishman turned his head, and presently saw above the hill round which he was winding, the gigantic figure of the outlaw, accompanied by three other men, striding up the mountain. The chief also happened to turn his head nearly at the same instant. He waved a silk handkerchief, and again shouting, “*Viva il Re Giorgio!*” thus took his last farewell!

The muleteer, who had preserved a respectful silence, only broken by a word or two, as long as the outlaw was with them, now gave way to his tongue. “Don Cesare,” said he, “is a robber—there is no doubt of that; some say an assassin, though, for my part, I believe he has only killed five or six Neapolitans; but there is much that is good in him for all that!”

After my friend’s experience, it was not for him to contradict the muleteer’s assertion.

SPANISH BRIGANDS.

FOR Brigands, Spain stands next in rank to the Kingdom of Naples and the States of the Church. The reasons are too obvious to require any explanation here. In comparing the Italian with the Spanish bands, from the accounts I have read and heard, I should be inclined to say that the latter were generally more brutal and ferocious, and less romantic—if, after all I have said, the reader will still deem the term romantic at all applicable to the Italian banditti.

I tax my memory in vain to recall any incident in Italy where a band of robbers behaved with such cowardly, disgusting atrocity, as did the Spaniards in a rencounter related by an eye-witness, and a gentleman every way worthy of credit.

The following is the account, taken verbatim from "A Year in Spain, by a Young American;" a clever, amusing, and instructive work.

The young American, an officer of the United States Navy, was travelling from Tarragona towards Valentia, by the Spanish diligence or stage coach. It was night, and he was awakened from sleep and a pleasant dream of his home, by the sudden stopping of the cumbrous vehicle, and by the noise of angry voices on the road.

"I roused myself," says he, "rubbed my eyes, and directed them out of the windows. By the light of a lantern that blazed from the top of the diligence, I could discover that this part of the road was skirted by olive trees, and that the mules, having come in

contact with some obstacle to their progress, had been thrown into confusion, and stood huddled together, as if afraid to move, gazing upon each other, with pricked ears and frightened aspect. A single glance to the right hand gave a clue to the mystery. Just beside the fore wheel of the diligence stood a man dressed in that wild garb of Valencia, which I had seen for the first time in Amposta. His red cap, which flaunted far down his back, was in front drawn closely over his forehead, and his striped manta, instead of being rolled round him, hung unembarrassed from one shoulder. Whilst his left leg was thrown forward in preparation, a musket was levelled in his hands, along the barrel of which his eye glared fiercely upon the visage of the conductor. On the other side, the scene was somewhat different. Pepe, being awake when the interruption took place, was at once sensible of its nature. He had abandoned the reins, and jumped from his seat to the road side, intending to escape among the trees. Unhappy youth, that he should not have accomplished his purpose! He was met by the muzzle of a musket when he had scarce touched the ground, and a third ruffian appearing at the same moment from the treacherous concealment of the very trees towards which he was flying, he was effectually taken and brought round into the road, where he was made to stretch himself upon his face, as had already been done with the conductor.

“I could now distinctly hear one of these robbers—for such they were—inquire in Spanish of the mayoral as to the number of passengers; if any were armed; whether there was any money in the diligence; and then, as a conclusion to the interrogatory, demanding *La bolsa!* in a more angry tone. The poor fellow meekly obeyed. He raised himself high enough to draw a large leathern purse from an inner pocket, and, stretching his hand upward to deliver it, said,

Toma usted caballero, pero no me quito usted la vida! ‘Take it, cavalier; but do not take away my life!’ The robber, however, was pitiless. Bringing a stone from a large heap collected for the repair of the road, he fell to beating the mayoral upon the head with it. The unhappy man sent forth the most piteous cries for *misericordia* and *piedad*. He might as well have asked pity of the stone that smote him, as of the wretch who wielded it. In his agony he invoked *Jesu Christo, Santiago Apostol y Martir, La Virgin del Pilar*, and all those sacred names held in awful reverence by the people, and most likely to arrest the rage of his assassin. All in vain: the murderer redoubled his blows, until growing furious in the task, he laid his musket beside him, and worked with both hands upon his victim. The cries for pity which blows had first excited, blows at length quelled. They had gradually increased with the suffering to the most terrible shrieks, then declined into low and inarticulate moans, until a deep-drawn and agonized gasp for breath and an occasional convulsion alone remained to show that the vital principle had not yet departed.

“It fared even worse with Pepe, though, instead of the cries for pity, which had availed the mayoral so little, he uttered nothing but low moans that died away in the dust beneath him. One might have thought that the extreme youth of the lad would have insured him compassion: but no such thing. The robbers were doubtless of Amposta, and, being known to him, dreaded discovery. When both the victims had been rendered insensible, there was a short pause, and a consultation in a low tone between the ruffians; who then proceeded to execute their plans. The first went round to the left side of the diligence, and, having unhooked the iron shoe and placed it under the wheel, as an additional security against escape,

opened the door of the interior, and, mounted on the steps, I could hear him distinctly utter a terrible threat in Spanish, and demand an ounce of gold from each of the passengers. This was answered by an expostulation from the Valencian shopkeeper, who said that they had not so much money, but what they had would be given willingly. There was then a jingling of purses, some pieces dropping on the floor in the hurry and agitation of the moment. Having remained a short time at the door of the interior, he did not come to the cabriolet, but passed at once to the rotunda. Here he used greater caution, doubtless from having seen, the evening before, at Amposta, that it contained no women, but six young students, who were all stout fellows. They were made to come down, one by one, from their stronghold, deliver their money and watches, and then lie flat upon their faces in the road.

“Meanwhile, the second robber, after consulting with his companion, returned to the spot where the zagal Pepe lay rolling from side to side. As he went towards him, he drew a knife from the folds of his sash, and having opened it, placed one of his naked legs on either side of his victim. Pushing aside the jacket of the youth, he bent forward and dealt him repeated blows in every part of the body. The young priest, my companion, shrunk back shuddering into his corner, and hid his face within his trembling fingers; but my own eyes seemed spell-bound, for I could not withdraw them from the cruel spectacle, and my ears were more sensible than ever. Though the windows at the front and sides were still closed, I could distinctly hear each stroke of the murderous knife, as it entered its victim. It was not a blunt sound as of a weapon that meets with positive resistance; but a hissing noise, as if the household

implement, made to part the bread of peace, performed unwillingly its task of treachery. This moment was the unhappiest of my life; and it struck me at the time, that if any situation could be more worthy of pity than to die the dog's death of poor Pepe, it was to be compelled to witness his fate, without the power to aid him.

Having completed the deed to his satisfaction, this cold-blooded murderer came to the door of the cabriolet, and endeavoured to open it. He shook it violently, calling to us to assist him; but it had chanced hitherto that we had always got out on the other side, and the young priest, who had never before been in a diligence, thought, from the circumstance, that there was but one door, and therefore answered the fellow that he must go to the other side. On the first arrival of these unwelcome visitors, I had taken a valuable watch which I wore from my waistcoat-pocket, and slipped it into my boot; but when they fell to beating in the heads of our guides, I bethought me that the few dollars I carried in my purse might not satisfy them, and replaced it again in readiness to be delivered at the shortest notice. These precautions were, however, unnecessary. The third ruffian, who had continued to make the circuit of the diligence with his musket in his hand, paused a moment in the road ahead of us, and having placed his head to the ground as if to listen, presently came and spoke in an undertone to his companions. They stood for a moment over the mayoral, and struck his head with the butts of their muskets, whilst the fellow who had before used the knife returned to make a few farewell thrusts, and in another moment they had all disappeared from around us.

“In consequence of the darkness, which was only partially dispelled in front of the diligence by the

lantern which had enabled me to see what occurred so immediately before me, we were not at once sensible of the departure of the robbers, but continued near half an hour after their disappearance in the same situation in which they left us. The short breathings and the chattering of teeth, lately so audible from within the interior, gradually subsided, and were succeeded by whispers of the females, and soon after by words pronounced in a louder tone; whilst our mangled guides, by groans and writhings, gave evidence of returning animation. My companion and I slowly let down the windows beside us, and, having looked round a while, opened the door and descended. The door of the interior stood open as it had been left, and those within sat each in his place in anxious conversation. In the rear of the coach was a black heap on the ground, which I presently recognized for the six students who had occupied the rotunda, and who, lying flat upon their faces, made the oddest figure one can conceive, rolled up in their black cloaks, with their cocked-hats of the same solemn colour emerging at intervals from out the heap. As we came cautiously towards them, they whispered among each other, and then first one lifted his head to look at us, and then another, until finding that we were their fellow-travellers, they all rose at once like a cloud, notwithstanding a threat which the robbers had made to them at their departure, to wait by the road-side and shoot down the first who should offer to stir. It will readily occur to the reader that if resistance to this bold and bloody deed could have been made at all, it might have been by these six young men, who, being together and acquainted with each other, might have acted in concert, whereas the rest of the party were as completely separated as though they had been in distinct vehicles. But if it be considered that they had

been awakened suddenly by armed ruffians, that they were destitute of weapons, and knew not the number of their assailants, it will appear more natural that they should have acted precisely as they did.

“Our first care, when thus left to ourselves, was to see if any thing could be done for our unfortunate guides. We found them rolling over in the dust and moaning inarticulately, excepting that the conductor would occasionally murmur forth some of those sainted names whose aid he had vainly invoked in the moment of tribulation. Having taken down the light from the top of the coach, we found them so much disfigured with bruises and with blood, that recognition would have been impossible. The finery of poor Pepe, his silver buttons and his sash of silk, were scarcely less disfigured than his features. - There happened to be in our party a student of medicine, who now took the lead in the Samaritan office of binding, with pieces of linen and pocket-handkerchiefs, the wounds of these unhappy men. While thus engaged, we heard the noise of footsteps in the direction of Amposta, and shortly after a man came up with a musket in his hand. Having heard our story, and inquired the route which we supposed the robbers to have taken, he discharged his musket several times in that direction. He wore a mongrel kind of uniform, and proved to be one of the *resguardo*, or armed police, which is scattered over the country for the prevention of smuggling, and the protection of lives and property; but its members receiving a salary insufficient for their support, as is the case with almost all the inferior servants of the Spanish crown, are obliged to increase their means the best or worst way they can, and are often leagued in practices which it is their business to suppress. It would perhaps be bold to say that this man was either directly or indi-

rectly engaged with those who had just robbed us ; but his appearance at this conjuncture was both sudden and singular.

“ The tragedy over, a farce succeeded which lasted until daylight. Many carts and waggons that were passing on the road came to a halt about us ; but we could not proceed on our journey, nor could the bleeding guides be removed from the road, until the *alcalde* of the nearest town should appear and take cognizance of the outrage. He came at length, a fat little man, with a red cockade in his hat, in token of the loyalty which had doubtless procured him his office. He commenced his examination of the scene of bloodshed with an air of professional coolness which showed that this was not the first time he had been called from bed on such an occasion. He put his hand into the puddle of blood beside the mayoral, and gave the stone with which his head had been battered in care to one of his attendants. This done, one of the carts which had halted near us was put in requisition to carry-off the poor fellows, who had now lain rolling and weltering in the dust for more than two hours. There was some difficulty to get the people who stood by to lift the bodies into the cart, and we were ourselves obliged to perform the task. I afterwards learned, that in Spain a person found near the body of a murdered man is subject to detention and imprisonment, either as a witness, or as one suspected of the crime ; and it is owing to this singular fact that Spaniards, instead of hurrying to lend succour, avoid a murdered man as they would avoid a murderer. Indeed it may be doubted whether in Spain the law be not more dreaded by the peaceful inhabitant than the very robbers and murderers from whom it should protect him. Hence it is, that now, as in the time of Gil Blas, the word *Justicia*, which should inspire the

honest with confidence, is never pronounced without a shudder.

“ These painful scenes at length had an end, and the cart, into which the guides had been placed, returned slowly towards Amposta. Before it drove away, the mayoral showed symptoms of returning sensibility; but Pepe seemed in his last agony. Two soldiers of the *resguardo* took their places to conduct the diligence; and when the rope, which the robbers had stretched across the road from tree to tree, had been removed, the mules were again set in motion, hurrying from the scene of disaster, as though they had been sensible of its horrors. The day had now completely dawned, and the sun, rising into a cloudless sky, shone abroad upon a fertile country and the peaceful scenes of cultivation. There was little, however, in the change to inspire cheerfulness or consolation; for, if nature looked so fair, man sank in the comparison.

“ The first place we came to was San Carlos, one of the *new villages* established by the patriotic Olavide. We halted in the public place, which stood in the form of an amphitheatre, and were soon surrounded by all the village worthies, to hear, once and again, from the now loquacious students, the story of our misfortunes. It was, however, no novelty to them; and, when they had seen us entering the town, driven by the cut-throat *resguardo*, who held muskets in their hands instead of whips, they were all, doubtless, as certain of what had happened as when in possession of the details. The *alcalde* of San Carlos came forth with especial consequence to receive official information of the outrage; then, consulting with the rusty commandant of a few ragged soldiers who composed the garrison, part of them were sent of to search for the robbers, already snug a-bed, perhaps, in Amposta,

and part were ordered to accompany the diligence to Vinaroz, where our mules were to be changed.

“ Vinaroz is quite a large town, and, as we entered it, the inhabitants were in a buzz of anxious curiosity at the unusual detention of the diligence. We had scarce stopped ere we were completely hemmed in by a questioning crowd; so, leaving my Catalan companions to find consolation in imparting their sorrows, I pushed my way through groups of half-naked Valencians, royalist volunteers of most unprepossessing appearance, and greasy monks of Saint Francis, until, having cleared the crowd and reached the court-yard, I mounted at once to the eating-room of the posada. Here were parties of travellers still more interested in the story of our misfortune than those below, who had merely an idle curiosity to gratify. Two Catalan gentlemen, who were travelling from Madrid to Barcelona in their own carriage, cross-questioned me as to the dangers that lay in the road before them, and, in return for the consolation I imparted, told me that the same thing might happen to me any day in Spain; that in La Mancha the robbers no longer skulked among the trees and bushes, like snakes, but patrolled the country on horseback and at a gallop; that hitherto I had passed along the sea-coast, where the country was well cultivated and populous, and the inns good; but that towards Madrid I should find a naked plain, destitute of trees, of water, of houses, and of cultivation; with inns still more miserable than the poverty of the country justified; and, learning at last that no motive of business or necessity had brought me into Spain, they wondered that I should have left the kind looks and words, the comforts and security which meet the stranger in France, to roam over a country which they frankly owned was fast relapsing into barbarity. I half wondered at myself, and, dreading further discouragement from these sorry comforters, abandoned

their society, to seek something to eat ; for, in consequence of the detention we everywhere met with, it would be three in the afternoon before we should reach Torre Blanca, the usual stopping-place of the diligence. There was fish frying in some part of the house, and now, as I scented my way to the kitchen, I thought that there was still a consolation.

“ The kitchen of the posada at Vinaroz offered a scene of unusual confusion. The hostess was no other than the mother of Pepe, a very decent-looking Catalan woman, who, I understood, had been sent there the year before by the Diligence Company, which is concerned in all the inns at which their coaches stop throughout the line. She had been already told of the probable fate of her son, and was preparing to set off for Amposta in the deepest affliction ; and yet her sorrow, though evidently real, was singularly combined with her habitual household cares. The unusual demand for breakfast by fourteen hungry passengers had created some little confusion, and the poor woman, instead of leaving these matters to take care of themselves, felt the force of habit, and was issuing a variety of orders to her assistant ; nor was she unmindful of her appearance, but had already changed her frock and stockings, and thrown on her mantilla, preparatory to departure. It was indeed a singular and piteous sight, to see the poor perplexed woman changing some fish that were frying, lest they should be burnt on one side, adjusting and repinning her mantilla, and sobbing and crying all the while. When the man came, however, to say that the mule was in readiness, every thing was forgotten but the feelings of the mother, and she hurried off in deep and unsuppressed affliction.

“ So long as the daylight lasted, our road continued to follow the general line of the coast, and passed through a country of vines and olives, which, by its

fertility and laboured cultivation, began already to indicate the fair kingdom of Valencia, the garden of Spain, so renowned throughout all Europe. The season, though much later than in Catalonia, and still more so than in Provence, was nevertheless the season of decaying cultivation, and nature was beginning to put on a graver dress. There was enough in this and the events of the past night to promote melancholy, had other causes been wanting; but the whole road was skirted with stone crosses, that had been raised opposite to as many scenes of robbery and assassination*. They were rudely fashioned from blocks of stone, with a short inscription cut on each, simply mentioning *aqui mataron* (here they killed) such a person on such a day and year; and almost every one had a stone upon it in a hollow which had been gradually worn there. This usage, which is not peculiar to Spain, is variously accounted for. Some say that it originates in a desire to cover the ashes of the dead. But such cannot be the cause here, since the bodies of the people thus murdered are not buried by the road side, but in the *campo santo* of a neighbouring village. It is also asserted that a superstitious feeling leads to the placing of a stone in this manner, as an evidence of detestation towards the murderer. Be it as it may, the continual occurrence of these crosses, placed singly or in groups of two or three along the road to Valencia, seemed to me to cor-

* “ And here and there, as up the crag you spring,
 Mark many rude-carved crosses near the path;
 Yet deem not these Devotion's offering—
 These are memorials frail of murderous wrath;
 For wheresoe'er the shrieking victim hath
 Pour'd forth his blood beneath the assassin's knife,
 Some hand erects a cross of mouldering lath;
 And grove and glen with thousand such are rife
 Throughout this purple land, where law secures not life.”
Childe Harold.

roborate that character for perfidy which the Valencians bear throughout Spain. It furnished a well-filled index of treachery and murder, of avarice, revenge, and all those darker passions which degrade our nature. Many of the crosses were very old; others bore date in the last century; many denoted the murderous struggle for independence in later times, whilst a still greater number had been erected in the turbulent period of the Constitution, and bore testimony to the fury of religious and political fanaticism. As we passed rapidly along, I glanced with a feverish interest at each, whilst my fancy, taking the brief inscription as a text, and calling up the recollections of the night before, endeavoured to furnish forth the story of disaster.

“At Torre Blanca, as at every place we came to during the remainder of the journey, there was a most annoying scene caused by the garrulity of the students and the curiosity of the gossiping inhabitants. Acting upon the principle of shutting the stable door after the steed was stolen, the military commandant of the town ordered four ill-fed dragoons to mount on as many worse-fed horses, and accompany us to Villareal. Though the number of these soldiers was so limited, there was as great a variety in their caps and uniforms as though they had belonged to different corps. Some had boots with spurs on the heels, others laced shoes with a spur on the right foot; and, instead of snug valises of leather, they had old canvass saddle-bags tied to their saddles. To make up for the poorness of their accoutrements, they had long black moustaches, and eyes of fire that were constantly on the look-out for enemies; and when there were any objects of suspicious appearance in the road before us, they would prepare their carbines, and, kicking their jaded beasts into a gallop, hurry forward in a way that showed that good looks were the least of their qualifications.”

POLINARIO*.

MY next anecdote of Spanish robbers is, however, of a more agreeable character. It is also extracted from the work of a recent traveller, from Mr. Inglis's "Spain in 1830." Our countryman in the course of his peregrinations, stopped one night at a posada, or inn, in the south of Spain, and sat down to sup at a sort of *table d'hôte*, with such company as had gathered at the said place of repose and refection.

"Towards the conclusion of supper, a guest of no small importance took his place at the table : this was no other than the celebrated Polinario, during eleven years the dread of half Spain, and now following the honest calling of guard of the Seville diligence. I never saw a finer man, or one whose appearance more clearly indicated the profession which he had abandoned. I could not help fancying that his countenance expressed a certain lawlessness of mind, and contempt of peaceable persons like myself, which an assumed suavity of manner was unable altogether to conceal : this suavity of manner is, however, very remarkable, and I believe is in perfect accordance with his conduct when a robber ; for Polinario was never guilty of any act of wanton cruelty or barbarity, but along with the most fearless courage, he always evinced a certain forbearance, not uncommon among Spanish banditti ; but in him, having a deeper seat than the mock civility of a Spanish thief, arising rather from a softness at

* My ingenious friend Mr. Planché has made this anecdote the ground-work of his drama, "The Compact."

heart, which afterwards led to a change in his mode of life. The history of this change is curious, and I pledge myself for its authenticity.

“The usual range of Polinario was the northern part of the Sierra Morena and the southern parts of La Mancha ; and here he remained during eleven years.

“A few years ago, understanding that the Archbishop of Gaen would pass the Sierra Morena in his carriage, without other attendants than his servants, he lay in wait for the prelate, and stopped his carriage. The archbishop of course delivered his money ; and Polinario having received it, asked his blessing : upon this, the archbishop began to remonstrate with the robber, setting forth the heinousness of his offences, and the wickedness of his life : but Polinario interrupted the archbishop, by telling him it was of no use remonstrating upon his manner of life, unless his Grace could obtain a pardon for the past ; because, without this, it was impossible he could change his mode of living.

“The Archbishop of Gaen is a good man ; and feeling a real desire to assist Polinario in his half-expressed desire of seeking a better way of life, he passed his word that he would obtain for him his Majesty’s pardon ; and Polinario came under a solemn promise to the archbishop, that he would rob no more. In this way the matter stood for eleven months ; for it was eleven months before the archbishop could obtain the pardon he had promised ; and during all this time Polinario was obliged to conceal himself from the pursuit which the offer of a considerable reward had long before instigated. At length, however, the pardon was obtained ; and Polinario was free to lead an honest life. He admits, however, that he is not contented with the change ; and makes no

hesitation in saying, that the promise made to the archbishop alone prevents him from returning to his former profession ; but he says the archbishop kept his word to him, and he will keep his word to the archbishop."

During the peninsular war, Napoleon, who then drew his resources from so many countries, and had established the conscription, and by making war the only profitable occupation, had awakened a military spirit nearly all over Europe, had, as it will be remembered, a number of Italian regiments in the field. Besides the officers of these regiments, many young Italians of good families, particularly Neapolitans, were to be found on the staff of King Joseph, who had done ill, as far as his happiness was concerned, to quit the sure throne of Naples for the very uncertain one of Spain. Though his government was not a very popular one at Naples, during the short time it lasted, the amorous monarch had made such good use of his leisure, and of the lax morality then prevailing, that at his departure for Spain, he was sincerely regretted by a number of gay dames, who, having no longer his liberality to look to, warmly recommended their brothers, their cousins, &c. to be provided for in his new kingdom. It was curious enough to observe, that in many instances, these young Italians, now sent to assist in the subjugation of Spain by the French, were descended from Spanish families, whose founders had served and found fortune in the Spanish armies that had subdued Italy, and, under the great Captain Gonsalvo di Cordova and others, had established the dominion of Spain in the Milanese and the kingdom of the two Sicilies, in spite of all the efforts of the French. The shoots that Spain had thrown out in foreign conquest, were now returned to strike at her

own proud trunk and root! The hero of the following robber-story was not, however, of Spanish lineage, but descended from an ancient family originally of the Republic of Genoa, and long settled in the kingdom of Naples, where their possessions, particularly in Calabria, were at one time of an enormous extent: nor though on the staff of King Joseph, and a personal favourite of his, did Don Francesco owe his post, or his hopes of advancement, to sister or cousin, or any relation, or connexion, or friend of the female gender whatsoever. The name and rank of his family had had their influence of course, and Joseph, who was far from being either adventurous or courageous himself, admired those qualities in others—and there was not a person about him more distinguished by them than the young Italian.

Whenever there was anything daring to be done, whenever there was a message to be carried that required extraordinary speed, of all the aides-de-camp and others, Don Francesco was always the first to offer himself. But there appeared to be no danger whatever, and there was no need for haste when he met with his adventure. The intrusive King had been for some time at Madrid. England had not yet armed Wellington to do wonders, Spain seemed prostrate before the French, and though an occasional deed of blood showed their antipathy to the intruders, the destructive Guerilla warfare was not yet commenced, and though an occasional robbery was heard of, the country was not held as being much infested by banditti, and officers came and went, only accompanied by their orderlies.

Don Francesco was, therefore, despatched one morning, with only one man, a steady old Polish trooper, to carry some instructions to a small corps of the French army in cantonments, not many miles from Madrid. Having delivered these, he was to

visit some outposts scattered round the country, and then return to head-quarters at his own leisure, or rather, there was no precise time fixed for his return. He arrived safely at the cantonments, and having finished his short business, would have proceeded farther that evening, but the Colonel commanding there was a countryman, and an old friend, and he pressed him to stay dinner, and then it was too late to go any farther that night. At the Colonel's table were two young Frenchmen, who talked of relieving the ennui of "country-quarters" the following morning by a shooting excursion, and as the ground they intended to beat was the same over which Don Francesco's road lay, it was agreed, not only that they should start together, but that he, having finished his inspection, should join them, and take a day's sport.

Accordingly, they set off in high spirits the next morning, Don Francesco followed by his staunch Pole, but the French officers with no attendant, save a young, naked-legged Castilian, who carried their game-bags, and acted as guide. They parted company at the head of a little valley or hollow, about two hours before noon. There was no inn or posada near, but a scattered village seemed to lie midway up the hollow, and here it was agreed Don Francesco should join the young Frenchmen early in the evening, and after passing the night at the village, they were to continue their sport on the morrow. As he rode on his way he heard rather an active firing on the side of his friends, and anxious to have a share of such good sport, he put spurs to his horse, and did not draw rein until he came up to one of the French pickets. He here finished his business in a very short time, and obtaining a fresh horse, proceeded to do the rest of his duty. He now found he had more ground to go over than he had imagined, and when he returned to the post where he had left his own horse, it was

much later than he could have wished. To increase his comfort, a serjeant of tirailleurs, who had the command, assured him that in spite of all the troops scattered over the country, the Spaniards were daily becoming bolder, and showing that they detested the French—that a commissary of the army, and an officer of the line, had been assaulted, not many days before, in the very district he had to traverse, and had escaped being murdered almost by miracle; and finally, he added, that even before the French invasion, the place bore a bad name for robbers. The young Neapolitan thought his friends had been rather unlucky in the choice of their shooting-ground; but he could hardly fancy breaking his engagement, and late as it was, he mounted his own steed, which was by this time well refreshed, and set off at a hand-gallop, for the glen where he had left them. The old Polish trooper, who had heard the dialogue between his master and the serjeant, would, of a certainty, have rather *rebroussé chemin*; but he was accustomed to danger, he was piqued too by the seeming indifference to it in Don Francesco, and he could not conceive (he had yet to learn what the Spaniards were,) that the peasantry would dare to attack an officer of rank so near the French forces.

They reached the glen where they had left the two Frenchmen in safety, but it was dark, and when they rode up to what they had taken in the morning for a village, nearly every white spot, instead of being a house, was a calcareous rock. There were, however, among these deceptive projections some half dozen of miserable cottages, where Don Francesco confidently expected to find his friends; but where, on inquiry, he found them not, and if the words of the inhabitants were to be taken, no such persons had been seen there since the morning. Rather inclined to be angry at his friends for their want of punctuality, than to sus-

pect anything had happened to them, Don Francesco was about to turn his horse's head, when an old goat-herd addressed him, and told him he had seen the two strangers cross the hills at the top of the glen, and that doubtless they would be found at a farm-house in that direction—not more than a good league off, where the game was most abundant.

Spirited on by this intelligence, the young Neapolitan took the direction pointed out to him, and, darker and darker though it became, he and his follower contrived to make good speed for half an hour, when they thought they ought to be near the said farm-house. But when they slackened their pace, and peered through the night-gloom, and listened to catch, if it might be, the barking of a dog, or the tinkling bells of a sheep-fold, or anything to announce the neighbourhood of a farm or a cottage, they could see nothing, but that the rough path they had hitherto followed now lost itself in a labyrinth of other paths, and nothing in the world could they hear but the panting of their horses and the murmur of the night-wind among the brush-wood that grew on every side of them. The country also seemed to be wilder and more desolate even than that they had left—and a country more treeless, houseless, uncultivated, barren, and utterly desolate, than that round Madrid, is scarcely to be found in Europe. Don Francesco, however, was not to be turned back; and, indeed, to go back to the pickets, or to attempt reaching the cantonments, would now have been as difficult as to find out the farm-house. He did, therefore, what is perhaps as wise a thing as a man can do under such circumstances, he threw the reins on his horse's neck, and let him choose his own way. The sagacious creature had not gone far, when he drew up his head, and then threw out his nostrils, and then neighed, and the moment after a little glimmering light gave an additional proof that

they were near some habitation. "It is the farm-house we are seeking," thought the young man; and going on in the direction of the light, they soon found themselves before a long, low wall, in which, after groping for some time, they found a strong wooden gate. As they struck upon this, the light disappeared—then they heard a slight noise—and the light re-appeared, but lower down than it had been seen before. They then heard the sounds of the opening of a door, and then a light was seen approaching them. Nothing doubting but that his friends were within, Don Francesco now called out their names. There was no answer given; but presently the gate before which he stood was unbarred, and they were admitted into an open yard, which seemed to have stabling and barns round three of its sides. From the readiness with which they had gained admittance, both master and man were confirmed in their opinion that their friends must be there, and retired to rest; and they asked no questions, until their conductor, an old Spaniard, led them to the door of the house, on whose threshold there stood another Spaniard, who seemed to wear a hospitable smile on his countenance. After a courteous salutation, the young officer asked whether there were not two Frenchmen within.

They were not—they had not been seen—but had they come, there would have been a welcome for them, as there was for those caballeros who now arrived, was the reply.

The fellow's manners were good; there seemed an air of mildness and respectability about him—the night without was as dark as ever, and a cold rain, that had been threatening for some time, now began to pelt most pitilessly; so wishing his friends, wherever they might be, as civil a host and as good a lodging as he seemed to have lighted upon, he gave his horse to his orderly, and walked in. The apartment had

nothing remarkable about it. Its inmates were, an old woman, another man, whose countenance was not very prepossessing, but not much wilder or more forbidding than the general run of the dingy Castilian peasants, and to these was presently added, besides the host who had entered with Don Francesco, a young and rather pretty girl, who seated herself near the fire, which burned in the centre of the room. To her, of course, the young soldier's attention was presently turned. He saw her lean her head on both her hands, as though suffering from pain; and then he saw, or fancied he saw, that she looked at him now and then—looked at him with uneasiness. Perhaps, however, this only struck him afterwards.

As an Italian, whose language is itself so like to the Spanish, Don Francesco had not had much difficulty in learning the latter idiom; he had now, moreover, been some months in the country, and being rather of a literary turn, he had paid some attention to its books and grammar, &c.—things which the French were very *apt* to despise. And then the French, generally, as we all know, have a remarkable inaptitude for languages; so much so, that there was not one in a thousand among them, who, even after several years' residence in Italy, could express himself in that beautiful tongue with anything like propriety of idiom or accent.

As he spoke to them, the Castilians made the remark with astonishment, that Don Francesco spoke such Spanish as they had never heard from the mouth of a Frenchman.

“I am no Frenchman,” said he.

This assertion evidently produced a considerable effect: the Spanish girl fixed her large black eyes on him; the man, who seemed the master of the house, asked him of what country then he was.

When he replied he was an Italian, the host re-

joined, "Oh, then you are half a Spaniard—but you are here with the French army after all!"

As Don Francesco was thinking he did not altogether like the tone with which the last words were pronounced, and the expression of countenance that accompanied them, his Polish trooper, who had been busy with the horses, came in, and stepping up to his master, whispered in French, "I hope, Sir, we have got into friendly quarters—but there is something I don't quite fancy—there are several desperate-looking fellows in the stable, and, I am almost sure, the old goatherd who directed us hither is one among them!"

Startled as he was at this information, the young soldier, however, preserved his presence of mind: he felt, that if they had really fallen into a trap, escape by force was utterly impracticable; and that the best thing he could do, was to keep a watchful eye on his friends within the house, and to tranquillize his faithful companion, who might be on his guard as to what was going on without. So, affecting to treat lightly the trooper's suspicions, and only telling him to keep the saddles on the horses, and to have their reins ready on their necks, he gave him part of the supper and wine his host had provided, and dismissed him, with a recommendation to sleep as lightly as though he were picketed in the field with the enemy close before him. While he took his own supper, Don Francesco continued his conversation with the Spaniards. So quiet and well disposed did they all again seem, that his apprehensions almost entirely left him, and he taxed himself with folly for having suspected any evil at their hands.

It was by this time waxing late—two of the Spaniards and the old woman had retired one by one, very devoutly wishing him "*la buena noche,*" and that the Saints might guard him. The young girl

lingered still, but she, too, withdrew at last. Don Francesco then inquired his way for the morrow's journey, and, expressing his intention of setting off at daybreak, begged to be shown to his place of rest. His complacent host regretted that his accommodations were not better, and led him up a tottering wooden staircase, or rather a broad-stepped ladder, into a large dark room, which seemed to prolong itself over part of the stabling. There was a narrow window at each end of the room, from one of which he fancied the light that first attracted him must have proceeded. The floor of the room was partly covered with grain and household provisions, but near the farther end, to which they advanced, there were two low couches, one of which was already occupied by somebody with a large Spanish capote thrown over him. The host, putting his finger to his mouth, as if to prevent talking, which might disturb the sleeper, pointed to the mattress in the opposite corner; and no sooner had Don Francesco thrown his military cloak upon it, than whispering him a good night, the host instantly withdrew, and carried the lamp with him. As he descended the ladder, he drew a trap-door after him, and the young soldier heard the noise, as if of a sliding bolt, to secure the door.

This jarred unpleasantly on Don Francesco's nerves. Instead of throwing himself at once on the couch, he grasped his pistols, which he had kept about his person, and drawing his sword, groped his way to the upper end of the room by which he had entered. The intense darkness of the night had somewhat abated—a glimmering of uncertain light penetrated through the low narrow windows, which were opposite to each other, and fell on two small spaces of the flooring, but all the rest of the long room was wrapped in a gloom so dense, that he could not see the bright blade of the weapon he held in

his hand. With some difficulty he piloted himself through the heterogeneous materials that encumbered the apartment, and by kneeling down and feeling the rough boards with his hand, he detected an iron ring which raised the trap-door. To his surprise and relief, when he applied his arm's strength to this, the door opened at once, and proved his ear had deceived him as to its being fastened. He again thought himself a fool for harbouring suspicion; but before returning to his resting-place, he listened a few seconds at the aperture he had made by only partially lifting up the door. At first all was silent as though he had held his ear over an open tomb, and then he heard the low murmuring of a voice below as if in prayer. Encouraged by the latter circumstance, and fully deciding once more that he was in the hands of good honest people, he groped his way back to the couch. Still, however, spite of himself, there was a lingering of doubt and suspicion, and before he threw himself on his mattress, he crept across the room to the side of his sleeping companion. Whoever this was, he seemed to sleep most peacefully—with his capote drawn over his head, not even his breathing could be heard.

“People do not sleep this way in a den of robbers and murderers,” thought Don Francesco, who at length wrapped his own mantle about him and laid himself down. All remained quiet—he thought a little of the events of the day, and his disappointment, and again hoping that his unpunctual friends had come to no harm, and had found as good lodgings as he had done, he gave way to fatigue and drowsiness and was falling asleep—when he was suddenly startled by the creaking of a door. Quick as he was, before he grasped his sword and pistols and rose to his feet, a door, which he had not observed in the darkness, was opened between him and the bed on the opposite side





A.M. Hafizan, del.

S. Bull, sculpt

JOHN FRANCESCO'S ESCAPE.

of the room, and a little yellow light, as though of a lamp skreened, rushed into the apartment.

Though the prospect of a hopeless struggle now presented itself, and the chill of despair fell on his heart, the young soldier levelled his pistol with a steady aim, and had nearly pressed the ready trigger, when he saw that the figure which stole into the room was that of the young Spanish damsel, whose conduct and looks below stairs had attracted his attention.

“Stranger,” said she, in a fearfully agitated whisper, “put up your arms and follow me—there is hardly a minute between you and murder!”

“Ah! is it so?” said the young man, gasping for breath.

“You will be the first guest that leaves this room alive,” said the girl: “but haste, or you will be too late!”

“Then let me rouse also this man who sleeps so soundly,” said Don Francesco.

“Think of yourself—he needs not your care!” said the girl.

Even in that extremity of danger the brave soldier could not reconcile himself to the thought of leaving a fellow-creature to the knife, and he stepped to the other side of the room. The trembling girl moved with him, drew the capote from the body, and holding down the lamp she held, and turning away her own eyes, disclosed to those of Don Francesco the ghastly countenance of one of the young Frenchmen he had been in search of.

As to what passed after this horrid disclosure,—as to his feelings or his actions, for some seconds, the young man could never render an account. What he first recollected was standing at the head of a flight of rough stone steps that descended from what appeared to be a hay-loft into the court-yard, with the Spanish girl pointing to the wall that enclosed the court.

While standing here listening to the directions the girl was giving him, as to the road he was to take to reach Madrid, he heard the well-known voice of his poor faithful trooper utter a French exclamation, and the next instant the report of a carbine shot, and then the noise of a deadly scuffle proceeded from that part of the stable which now seemed to be immediately beneath his feet.

“Oh, fly!—it is your only hope—may God go with you!” muttered the agonized girl, still pointing to the wall. More than half stupified, Don Francesco crept down the stone steps; but as he descended, he saw a man, who had come out from the lower apartment or from the stable, advance across the courtyard to the narrow space between the foot of the stairs and the foot of the outer wall of the farm he had to climb. He then heard a long heavy groan—and then four more Spaniards came out and joined the man he had just seen. “The dog of a Frenchman is done for,” said one, whose voice seemed to be that of the host, “but he has wounded me sorely in the arm. Quick, however! the noise will have awakened his master, and we shall have trouble in despatching him!”

Don Francesco turned his head—the light and the girl were gone—the door at the top of the staircase seemed closed; but dark as it was, and though he had now crouched in the smallest compass possible under the rude stone balustrade that ran along one side of the steps, he dreaded they must discover him even from below as he lay there, for by this time one of the men had brought out a lamp.

“He remains quiet, however, as yet,” whispered another voice below; “perhaps the report of the fellow’s gun has not awakened him—let us up, and finish him at once.” The speaker’s foot seemed to be on the first step of the stone stairs, the light moved in

the same direction, and it was impossible Don Francesco could have escaped another moment, when a shrill female shriek was heard at the opposite end of the house, and a voice cried "The Frenchman!" "The Officer!" The Spaniards, fancying their aroused victim was there attempting his escape, rushed in that direction; whilst Don Francesco, understanding and availing himself of the feint which evidently proceeded from the girl, glided down the stairs, vaulted over the wall with some difficulty, and ran with all his speed from the accursed spot.

Though out of their lair, he was still far from being out of danger. They had horses, and would no doubt speedily pursue him; and then, in the darkness of the night, and in a wild country he had never before traversed, he could not tell whether he was following his young deliverer's directions, or running into fresh scenes of danger—perhaps returning on the very den from which he had escaped. Indeed, in a very short time he heard the hollow, rapid beat of horses' hoofs on the dark heath. The sounds did not, however, seem to approach; on the contrary, they waxed fainter and fainter, until they died away in the direction he fancied must be immediately opposite to that he was taking. Thus encouraged, he summoned up all his strength, and ran for a long time: but the returning agony of his apprehension may be conceived, when he was suddenly brought to a pause by hearing the sound of horses' feet right before him, and advancing to meet him. There was not a tree, a bush on the wide open heath to conceal him from his bloodthirsty pursuers. Fortunately, however, he had retained his dark grey cloak, and, wrapping himself in this, he laid himself flat on the ground, hoping that its colour, which assimilated with that of the heath, would prevent him from being discovered. The galloping horses came nearer and nearer; he saw them take the very

direction of the spot where he lay. And now another dreadful thought struck him. It might very well be that one of the villains in their haste had mounted his own favourite steed, which, if it came near where he lay, was almost certain to betray him, by stopping or neighing, and thus he would be discovered, even if he escaped the searching eyes of the murderers. He grasped his pistols; his sword was out of its sheath, as it had been since his retreat down the stairs of the house, and thus he lay with the resolution to sell his life dearly.

Meanwhile the horsemen came close upon him—so close, that at one time he thought he should be ridden over; but they passed the spot where he lay without discovering him. He remained supine as he was till the sounds of the hoofs and the villains' dreadful imprecations died away on his ear, when he rose, and again ran forward for some time at the top of his speed.

By this time the first rays of morning began to appear. Light, however, was of little service to him in that monotonous, unknown country, as to assisting him to find his way, but, on the contrary, if his pursuers still persisted in their search, it would betray him to them. He had run himself out of breath, and was so overcome by fatigue, that he was obliged to throw himself on the ground. Having rested for awhile, he resumed his journey, and soon came to a tolerably good and what seemed a frequented road. As he hesitated here what direction he should now take on this road, the distant, measured sounds of a drum faintly struck his ear; he bent his head to the earth, and then heard distinctly enough that it was a French drummer beating the reveillé. Cheered by these welcome tones, he pursued his way, and in about a quarter of an hour, as day broke into fulness of light, he saw a low, little village close before him,

with a detachment of French troops mustering on its outskirts. Setting up a shout of joy he ran on to the village, where he was presently safe among friends and comrades. His tale of horror was soon told, and a plan of proceeding arranged; but more than two hours passed ere he was sufficiently refreshed to mount a horse, and head the troops in search of the assassins. Unfortunately, too, there was no cavalry on the spot; and what with the difficulty of retracing his steps, and time lost on false scents, it was near noon when Don Francesco drew up the troops before a solitary farm-house, which, from the little he had been able to see of it in the obscurity of the preceding night, he thought must be that from which he had escaped. After having shouted in vain, the soldiers scaled the walls, and burst open the gate. The door of the dwelling-house was merely secured by a latch, and when he entered it, if the absence of every inmate had not been proof enough, Don Francesco could have sworn to the apartment. He rushed up the ladder to the accursed loft, expecting to find the body of his friend, but it was gone, and no trace of blood, or of anything connected with him, was left there. Some of the soldiers meanwhile had gone into the stables, which they found as empty as the rest of the house—all the horses had been removed, as also the body of the poor Pole; but on some straw, in a corner of the stable, they found a little pool of blood. This was the only evidence of crime the premises retained. On looking over the house, it was discovered that the provisions, and nearly all the portable articles of household furniture, (few, and simple enough in Spain!) had been carried off. It was vain to think of pursuing the fugitives; they failed in their search after the bodies of the young officer and the Pole; and then Don Francesco marched his men to the

huts where, on the preceding night, he had spoken with the goatherd. The huts were as empty as the farm-house!

To conclude a long story, the murderers were never caught. The companion of the murdered Frenchman, and the boy that had accompanied them, were never more seen or heard of; and it was supposed that, separated by accident, or the design of the Spaniards, from his friend, this second Frenchman met the fate of the first, and that the guide also was killed.

A FEW years since an atrocious band of Spanish robbers infested the neighbourhood of Talaveira. The scene of their ambush and attack was called "El Confessional," because these ruffians there gave their victims time to confess, and even provided them with the means of doing so, before they murdered them. Death, however, though frequently, was not always the consequence of falling into their hands. The time of their great power was during the last government of the Cortes, and it is probable that political animosities urged these, as many other bands, to the commission of more than the wonted atrocities of brigands. In what the Constitution might have ended, had not the French army of the constitutional King Louis XVIII. marched to the relief of the absolute King Ferdinand VII., it is difficult to say; but, certes, during its actual regimen, the Spaniards had few blessings for which they might be grateful. The bonds of society were broken loose, party and personal hate and revenge were fearfully indulged in, and the country was inundated by atrocious troops of robbers and cut-throats.

So much did they swarm, that an English gentleman, with whom I have the honour of being ac-

quainted, and who was at the time attached to our Embassy at Madrid, was stopped twice on one journey as he was carrying despatches, and, if I remember well, was robbed three times in about as many months.

My friend the Count —, who was also in Spain at the time, has described to me “The Confessional” as a sort of deep basin, down which the main road descends on one side, and ascends on the other. The robbers were accustomed to make their attack in the hollow, whilst their videttes stationed in ambush on the brims of the basin, or at the opposite points of the road, gave notice, if the opportunity were favourable, or if any force were approaching on either side of the hollow. At the time that my friend passed this horrid trap, as a robbery and murder had just been committed on some persons of consequence, the Cortes had ordered a body of troops to the spot; but though these soldiers were bivouacked there, and there was no appearance of danger, his companions and the muleteers could not help shuddering as they hurried through “The Confessional,”—so dreadful and so recent were the stories they had heard of crimes committed on that spot.

This same friend, in going to Cordova, was amused by the account of seven famous robbers, who were known all over the country by the title “Los siete hijos de Ejica,” or the seven sons of Ejica, a place near Carmona, on the route to Cordova. According to the traditions of the Spaniards, these seven desperadoes had obtained such wealth and such prizes, that all their buttons were of pure gold, and even the tubes in which they held their cigars were set with diamonds. My friend, however, recollects no very striking adventure of this wealthy band. I set aside two or three horrible and disgusting stories of Spanish robbers to make room for the following interesting anecdote, (communicated to me by my kind and

talented friend Mr. Brockedon,) which shows them in a better light.

A short time after the French war, and the restoration of Ferdinand VII., whose conduct made many of the loose guerilla parties continue out in the country as brigands, an English merchant arrived one evening at a small mean town, at the foot of the Sierra Morena. In the posada of the place where he took up his lodging for the night, he met a Spaniard of a commanding figure, and of a sharp, intelligent, but amiable countenance. Much struck with his appearance, the Englishman entered into conversation with him, and was still more delighted by his frank, spirited style of address and talking. Before supper was ready, the two had established that sort of traveller-intimacy, which is not perhaps the less delightful because it must finish in a few hours, and the parties, in all probability, never meet again; and when the meal was served, they sat down to it together, each, apparently, anxious to know more of the other. They conversed together during the progress of the supper, and long after it was over, until the sinking and flickering lamps on the table warned the Englishman it must be time to retire to rest. As he rose to do so, the Spaniard, with all his former frankness and gentlemanly manner, asked him which way his road lay on the morrow. The English merchant replied across the Sierra Morena, and indicated the road he meant to take.

The Spaniard, shaking his head, said he was sorry for this, as he had reasons to suspect that that very road at that very moment was beset by robbers, from whose numbers and activity there was no escape.

The Englishman confessed that this was unpleasant news, particularly as the affairs that called him towards Madrid were urgent.

“ But cannot you stay where you are a day or two ? ”

replied the Spaniard; "by that time they may have shifted their ground, and you may pass the mountains without meeting them."

The Englishman repeated that his business was urgent, said he was no coward, that he had hitherto travelled in Spain without any misadventure, and hoped still to do so.

"But, my good Señor," replied the Spaniard, "you will not cross the mountains to-morrow without being robbed, take my word for that!"

"Well, if it must be so, let them rob me," said the English merchant; "I have little money to lose, and they will hardly take the life of an unarmed and unresisting man!"

"They have never been accustomed so to act—let it be said to the honour of the band, they are not such cowardly assassins," replied the Spaniard, who was then silent, and seemed to be musing to himself.

The Englishman was beginning to call up one of the servants of the posada, to show him to his resting-place, when his companion, raising his hand, said,

"Not yet, Señor, not yet! listen!" and he continued in an under-tone. "It was my fortune some time since to have to cross the Sierra Morena, alone, like you; it was occupied then as now, by the *Salteadores*; but I met a man, also alone, as you have met me, who said he had rendered the captain of the band some service, and that he could give me a pass which should cause my person and my property to be respected by the robbers, and enable me to cross the mountains with perfect safety."

"A much better thing this than a king's passport," said the astonished Englishman. "Pray what was it? and did it succeed?"

"It was only a button," replied the Spaniard; "it did all that had been promised, and perhaps it has

not yet lost its charm—I will give it you, here it is!”

After searching in his pocket, the Spaniard produced a curiously-fillagreed silver button, and placed it in the hands of the Englishman, begging him to be careful of it, and to present it to any robbers that might attack him in the Sierra.

“But were *you* really attacked on your journey?” inquired the merchant.

“The button was respected by all the robbers I met, and I believe I saw them all,” said the Spaniard; “but ask no more questions, and take care of the button! to-morrow you will see whether it have lost its charm.”

With many thanks, the Englishman took his leave, and went to bed. On the following morning, when he continued his journey, the silver button ran in his head for some time. But it was not until noon, as he was toiling up one of the most rugged of the mountain paths, that he had the opportunity of trying its virtue. There his guide, who rode before him, was suddenly knocked off his mule, by a blow from the butt-end of a musket, and the next instant three other guns were levelled at the Englishman’s breast, by men who stepped from behind a rock. The attack was so sudden, that his ideas and recollection were disturbed, and he put his hand in his pocket, brought out his purse, and delivered it to the robbers, who were calling him all sorts of opprobrious names, before he thought of his silver button. But when the recollection came to his mind, and he produced it, much doubting of its efficacy, the oaths of the Salteadores were stopped at once, as though a sacred relic had been held before their eyes; they returned him his purse, earnestly entreated his pardon for all that had happened, and informed him that it was their bounden duty to see the bearer of that button

safe across the mountains. Accordingly, on went the merchant with the brigands for his guard, he blessing the silver button, and they showing him every possible attention and respect. On their way they met with other robbers, which proved how formidable was the band, and how impossible it would have been to escape them without the charmed button.

At length they came to a low, solitary house in a wild dell, far away from the beaten path across the Sierra, which they had abandoned for rocks that seemed never to have been trodden. Here the merchant was told he might stop and refresh himself. Nothing loth, he dismounted, and turned to the door, when his companion at the posada of the preceding evening, the donor of the magical button, met him on the threshold, with the words and the gestures of an hospitable welcome! His dress was changed—he now wore a splendid kind of uniform, the jacket of which was of velvet, embroidered with gold; but the Englishman recognised his commanding figure and impressive countenance in an instant, and gave him his hand as a friend.

“I got here before you,” said the Captain of the banditti, for such in fact was the donor of the button, “and have prepared a good dinner for you, being very certain that what I gave you last night would bring you in safety under my roof.”

The Englishman expressed his gratitude, and they sat down to dine. The bandit's dishes were savoury and good, and his wine was better. As the wine warmed the Englishman, he again expressed his gratitude, and then ventured to say, how astonished he was that a person of his host's manners, and one capable of such kind and generous feelings and actions, could lead such a kind of life.

The robber drew his hand across his dark brow and fiery eyes, and said—

“These are times when thieves and traitors thrive in the Royal court and the offices of government, and honest patriots are driven to the highway. As a guerilla, I shed my blood for my country, for my king, who, when he returned, would have left me to starve or to beg! But no matter—this is no business of yours. I met you, liked your manners, and have saved you!—that is enough! say no more!”

The Englishman of course desisted, and soon after rose to take his leave. The Captain, who recovered his good-humour, told him he should have an escort yet a little farther, and be put in the route he wished to follow. The merchant would then have returned the silver botton, but the robber insisted on his keeping it.

“You, or some friends of yours, may have to pass this way again,” said he, “and whoever has the button to produce, will be respected as you have been respected! Go with God! and say nothing as to what has happened between you and me and mine! Adios!”

The merchant’s farewell was an earnest and cordial one. Guided by the brigands, he soon reached the beaten road on the opposite side of the mountains, and would there have given them some money for the trouble he had caused them. They said they had their captain’s strict commands against this—they would not accept a real, but left him, wishing him a happy journey.

Some time,—I believe some years after this adventure, the English merchant heard with deep regret, that the Spanish robber-chief, whom he described as being one of the handsomest men he had ever beheld, had been betrayed into the hands of government, and put to a cruel and ignominious death.

SCHINDER-HANNES (JACK THE FLAYER), OR THE
ROBBER OF THE RHINE.

THIS famous brigand, whose trial occupies a conspicuous place among the modern *Causes Célèbres*, was, at the beginning of the present century, the terror of the Palatinate, and of the other provinces on both sides of the Lower Rhine; and the boldness and extent of his depredations entitled him to a foremost rank in the annals of modern brigandism. We indeed look in vain for his equal in Northern Europe. This man's real name was John Buckler, and he was born in 1779, at Muklen, on the right bank of the Rhine. His descent and training were good. His father, as fond of a vagrant life as he himself became, forsook his wife and family and enlisted in an Austrian regiment; soon growing tired of the army, or of the Austrians, he deserted from them, and fled to the Prussian territories, where his wife and his son John, then nine years of age, joined him. The elder Buckler obtained employment as forest-keeper, and was able to send his son to school, where Master John was instructed in the Lutheran communion. He might have continued an honest lad for some time longer, but one day, when he was about sixteen years old, a publican entrusted him with a whole *louis-d'or* to purchase some smuggled brandy for the house—this temptation was too strong for the virtue of Hannes, who spent the money in a jollification with his comrades, and then, afraid of the consequences should he return home, he decamped and wandered about the country. The first thing he appropriated to

himself, after the publican's *louis-d'or*, was a horse, which he stole, carried off, and sold.

At this time he could hardly have entertained a proper notion of the rights and dignity of the profession to which he had made a promising enough novice; for the next thing he did was to go and hire himself as a servant and aide-de-camp to the public executioner at Barenbach. Hannes, however, could not conquer his love of society; he was always fond of his glass of Rhenish, and of two or three jolly fellows to drink it with. There was a butcher belonging to a neighbouring town with the same propensities, and who probably had a certain sympathy with the executioner's man, arising from a similarity of profession. The slayer of sheep and oxen, and the assistant to the slayer of men, soon became very intrinsically intimate. Hannes swore he had not known such a good fellow since the lads with whom he had spent mine host's *louis-d'or*, and the butcher swore Hannes was a "prime one"—fit for anything. This butcher himself was of a certainty fit for the gallows, for, tired of killing other people's sheep, or sheep he paid the market price for, he induced Master John to go out and steal sheep and sell them to him at Kirn—at discreet prices.

This contraband trade could not last long, pleasant and profitable as it was. Hannes was arrested and conveyed to prison, and might have furnished some employment for his master, the executioner, had he not ingeniously contrived to escape his place of confinement. Wandering afterwards in the wild regions of the Hochwald, he fell in with Finck and Black Peter, the captains of two bands of daring outlaws, who had long been distinguished in their calling.

The circumstances of the times contributed to the formation of these predatory bands, and here, as we have shown elsewhere, the field for their excesses had

been prepared by political misfortunes and vices, without which no numerous associations of freebooters can long exist.

“The wars of the French revolution had raged for years, during which time the States bordering on the Rhine were continually over-run by troops, French and German; the fields had been ravaged, the cottages pillaged and burnt, the cattle carried away, forced contributions in money and kind exacted; most of the landholders and farmers became ruined, and the poorer class of labourers and artizans were absolutely starving, and these, as a last desperate resource, began thieving—some for the mere object of supporting existence; others, animated by a principle of revenge against their armed oppressors. Of the latter sort was the notorious band of Pickard, in Belgium. The political state of the country favoured their impunity. The little German governments, ecclesiastical and secular, into which it was parcelled under the old system, had been either suppressed by the French, or were allowed to drag on a precarious existence, powerless and detached from the former imperial confederation. In one part the French laws had superseded the German, but were not yet consolidated and enforced, and the subordinate agents of justice had become remiss in their duties, from the contagious example of general disorder into which society was thrown. Mechanics of all trades, vagrants, pedlars, strolling musicians, labourers, woodmen, Jews, formed the first band of robbers that appeared on the right or German side of the Rhine, as early as the years 1793-4*.” Surely such fatal results as these ought to have weight with the ambitious wagers of war, and with such as with uncertain prospective of success would revolutionise a

* See an excellent article in the “Monthly Review,” No. xxxii. for April 1828.

country. It is not the excesses of the army in the field that are alone to be feared—it is not the passions and the vices of soldiers that are alone to be provided against; but the disorder and licentiousness of a despoiled and embittered populace, that are almost as sure to follow in the train of war and revolution, as one wave of the sea rolls on the other. But a book devoted to robbers is not likely to reform conquerors, so let us return to the life of our robber of the Rhine.

The daring bands among whom he fell in the wild country of the Hochwald readily admitted Hannes as a member, and soon had reason to applaud his activity, address, and bravery. But after committing various depredations, such as stealing horses (to which he seems to have had all a Yorkshireman's partiality), &c. he fell a second time into the hands of justice and into a prison. His good luck and talents did not, however, desert him, and a second time (taking some of his comrades in the band, now fellow-prisoners, with him) he contrived to escape, by breaking through a wall of the prison of Sarrebruck. He must have been rather careless, or confident in his own resources; for not long-after he was seized in another part of the country, and after an examination, committed to a dungeon in the strong tower of Simmerm.

This was the third time Master John was in prison, and the old proverb saith, "Take care of the third time;" but he was as lucky as though it had been only his first die thrown with Fortune. By means of a broken knife, he contrived to remove a board in the wall of his dungeon, whence creëping into an outward apartment, he wrenched the iron bars from the window, and leaped out from a considerable height. He fell in his descent, and a heavy stone, which he had loosened, fell after him, and wounded him severely in one of his legs. Spite, however, of this wound, he

managed to crawl along in the dark to a neighbouring forest, where he lay concealed for two whole days, without food and without assistance.

On the third day, he found his way to the snug, retired house of an old associate, where his wound was dressed, and where he received all the succour and sympathy his case demanded. He soon recovered, and showed that his hair-breadth escapes, and pain and sufferings, had brought about no penitence. He began his career of highway robbery and general brigandism in company with numerous associates, who continued to increase under the shadow of his *préstitige*, talents, and energy, and who, for these qualities, now acknowledged him, not as a simple comrade, but as their chief. The other banditti, and even the sanguinary Black Peter himself, by degrees, submitted to his authority or advice. No expedition of moment was planned and undertaken, save by the directions of the famous gaol-breaker, who thus became the soul of the complicate body. It was now, in the plenitude of his power, that master John Buckler acquired the name of Schinder-hannes, or Jack the Flayer. He was young, rather handsome, clever, as we have seen, and a popular man with the fair sex, having had sundry love-adventures of considerable *éclat*. But his qualities as a romantic hero were soon increased, for he fixed his affections upon a pretty girl, one Julia Blœsus, whom, in defiance of the Church, it appears, he called his wife. The fair Julia, the daughter of a fiddler and horn-blower of some eminence, bore Schinder-hannes a child, accompanied him occasionally in his expeditions, dressed in male attire, and behaved throughout with that affection and devotedness which, according to some accounts, should only be looked for in the wives or mistresses of brigands.

The audacity of Schinder-hannes' band is almost

incredible, and can only be understood by reference to the state of the country, as I have described it. The travellers on the highway did not offer sufficient booty; they proceeded to force open houses, and to attack whole villages, carrying on at times a sort of regular fight with the inhabitants. In these operations, the Captain, with one or two of his cleverest men, was always the first to enter the house, having left part of his troop to guard the approaches, and to fire upon any one who dared to come near. His introductory essay in this line was made in the year 1800, on the house of a gentleman named Riegel, who lived at Otzweiler. Schinder-hannes, with fourteen of his men, armed with firelocks, suddenly appeared one night at the house of an honest miller in the immediate neighbourhood. They came with a good appetite, and imposed on the hospitality of the miller for a good supper, which they ate, and then went to work—and, at first, in a peaceful way enough, for they knocked a rat-tat at Mr. Riegel's door, which was opened by that gentleman's son-in-law. Schinder-hannes and two of his men rushed in, when their behaviour became less civil. They began to ill-treat the inmates, and threatened Mrs. Riegel with death if she did not reveal where the money was concealed. But still worse followed; for while the good lady was shrieking in the hands of the robbers, her husband, trying to escape through a window, was fired at, and killed on the spot; and her son-in-law was severely wounded. The report of fire-arms alarmed the neighbours, who sallied out in great numbers; and then the banditti thought it prudent to retire, which they did, keeping up a running fire against their pursuers.

It is to be remarked in Schinder-hannes' depredations, that the Jews, who are numerous in that part of Germany, and often wealthy, were the principal victims of them. He, indeed, seemed to consider

that people as legitimate plunder ; and strange as it may now appear in more civilized, settled, and tolerant days, many people of the country, who were not robbers, apparently entertained the same opinion. He assailed the house of a rich Jew named Wolff, at Ottenbach, and carried off a considerable booty. At Merxheim, the *rent-meister*, or magistrate of the place, pointed out to him another Jew of the name of Bœr, as a man of wealth, and as one who had rendered himself obnoxious to the people ; and immediately acting on the suggestion, Schinder-hannes attacked and plundered the house with little obstacle. The robbers fell in with the watch, to whom they plainly stated they were going "to rob a Jew," upon which they were allowed to pass !

The spring and autumn were the favourite seasons for these expeditions ; and Saturday nights were preferred for a curious reason. It appeared on their trial, when the robbers were finally brought to justice, that most of Schinder-hannes' *baldovers*, or spies, and some of the brigands themselves, were Jews, who, in the leisure of their sabbath-day, could more conveniently attend to the business of crime and rapine.

But still, it must be repeated, it is chiefly as sufferers that the Jews figure in Schinder-hannes' exploits. One day this bold robber, being posted in ambuscade near the high road, with only two of his followers, saw a caravan of about forty-five Jews returning from a fair at Kreuznacht. As they came near, he challenged them and ordered them to halt, which they all did at once, before three men. They turned out not worth the trouble of stopping ; they had only a few kreutzers a-piece, which they had gained by trafficking at the fair. The magnanimous robbers despised so paltry a booty, and left the Jews their leathern purses. But Schinder-hannes was in a

jocular mood, and he ordered them all to pull off their shoes and stockings.

In a minute every Jew among them pulled off his shoes and stockings.

Schinder-hannes then made them throw them all in a heap on one side of the road, and he and his companions, with their gun-stocks, so tossed and tumbled and mixed the shoes and stockings, that fellows so parted company, it would have been a difficult job indeed to find out a pair among them, or for any man to fit himself to his own, even if ten minutes had been allowed him.

“Now then, Jews,” cried Schinder-hannes, “take you every one of you his own stockings and his own shoes, put them on, and decamp instantly. Be honest, if you can, and take no one’s things but your own. I will shoot every one of you that takes another man’s shoe or another man’s stocking! Quick! quick! he is a dead man who is the last to be fitted to his own, and off, as sure as my name is Schinder-hannes!” And he and his followers levelled their muskets at the bare-footed Jews.

Well nigh bereft of their senses, by the dread which the threat and the name of the robber inspired, the poor Jews threw themselves altogether on the heap by the road-side, and began scrambling for their shoes and stockings, cuffing, and scratching, and abusing one another, in their hurry and impatience. When Schinder-hannes had amused himself for a while with this ludicrous spectacle, a subject worthy of Hogarth or Wilkie, he walked off with his comrades almost dying with laughter.

The mere name of the robber, whose exploits were spread far and wide, now struck terror into every breast. By a political alternation of kindness and severity, he imposed on the common people: and by

degrees even the wealthier class, who had suffered from him, dreaded Schinder-hannes so much, that, far from daring to inform against him, they avoided even the mention of his name. Unlike the Italian banditti of the Apennines, who live in wilds and gloomy solitudes, these robbers of the Rhine frequented the most joyous and peopled scenes. "They appeared in the open day, and in the very scenes of their robberies; they lounged in public-houses, went to dances and festivals, and were generally treated with great deference. When danger was near, they separated, and each repaired to his home, in various parts of the country, until called again by the captain on some new expedition*." Besides the fair Julia, the captain's mistress, many of the band had equally devoted wives, or innamoratas, who were made useful to the lawless community by procuring information, selling the goods plundered, and obtaining passports to proceed from one state to another.

The robbers must have invoked many a "blessing on the Rhine," for that noble river often bore them and their spoils to a place of safety and convenient sale. After a successful expedition on one side of the Rhine, generally the left bank, they were accustomed to cross the river, where they would remain quiet for some time, and dispose of their plunder. They changed costume and appearance according to circumstances. Schinder-hannes was very happy in his disguises, and so confident, that he once for a considerable time passed himself off as a steady merchant, and even repaired to the great trading mart, Frankfort. He ran, however, his risks. In 1801, he had a narrow escape in an affray with a party of soldiers in the electorate of Mayence, with whom he engaged in a drunken brawl at a public-house: on another

* Causes Criminelles Célèbres du dix-neuvième Siècle.

occasion, after pillaging the house of a Jew at Bayrthat, in the Palatinate, he was so closely pressed by a party of chasseurs, that he was obliged to seek concealment in a hay-loft. The soldiers visited his hiding-place, but he again miraculously escaped. But this escape was his last: he had worn out his extraordinary good luck, and the career of his crimes was now drawing near its end. He was closely watched and tracked to his haunts; he could no longer prosecute his expeditions without imminent peril, for even the peasants were now on the alert against him. He had risen and thrived during the confusion and horrors of war, but peace had now been made between France and Austria, the provinces on the Rhine had consequently been restored to tranquillity and security, and the administration was in the hands of men of energy, who determined to extirpate the banditti.

Schinder-hannes for some time wandered from place to place, but he every day found his resources failing him, and was at last arrested on suspicion. Fortunately for him, however, nobody knew him, and when, making a virtue of necessity, he was fain to sink from the dignity of a captain of robbers to the grade of a common soldier, and addressed himself to an Austrian recruiting captain, he was readily accepted, and enlisted under an assumed name. He marched with the rest of the recruits to Limbourg, and might have marched thence to some snug mud village in Hungary, where nobody would ever have known him, and have escaped the pursuits of justice for his past misdeeds; he might have commenced a new career of crime on another and a distant theatre; or he might have reformed, and become the serjeant-major and the ornament of an Austrian regiment; but, as he was walking through the streets of Limbourg, he was accidentally met by a peasant who recognised him, and denounced him to the magistrates, as the famous Schinder-hannes—the

Robber of the Rhine! No sooner was he denounced and produced by the officer to whom he enlisted, than the whole town flocked to see the man of whose exploits they had heard so much. Schinder-hannes had cultivated too numerous an acquaintance to hope to escape detection; he hung down his head; but he was sworn to by many who had met him on the road in the exercise of his calling. The Austrian captain gave him up to the civil power, and Schinder-hannes, after a career of unexampled audacity and success, (for this part of Europe,) which had lasted five years, was taken by a strong escort to Mayence, in May 1802. As soon as he saw himself in the hands of the French gens-d'armes, he cried, "I am lost! now, indeed, it is all over with me!" On his arrival at Mayence he was brought before the judges of the special criminal court, and to them he at once and freely gave a detailed account of his life and adventures. Such of his accomplices as were still living, were successively secured, and after eight months spent in investigations, and in receiving depositions against the robbers, in February 1803 the Criminal Court of Mayence declared itself competent to proceed on the trial of the accused. Omitting the doubtful or the frivolous, no less than fifty-three serious and substantiated charges were brought against Schinder-hannes. His accomplices arrested were sixty-seven. Among this number figured old Buckler, the forest-keeper, Schinder-hannes' father; the robber's mistress, Julia Blœsus; various other women, wives, mistresses, and sisters of the banditti; several itinerant musicians, Jews, a miller, &c. The acts of instruction, deposition, and interrogation produced for this extraordinary trial, filled, when printed, five thick folio volumes.

The public trial did not commence until the 24th of October 1803. Three of the accused had died

meanwhile in prison, but sixty-five were brought before the Court. One hundred and thirty-two witnesses appeared for the prosecution, and no less than two hundred and two for the prisoners. The first and second days of the trial were employed in reading the act of accusation. The whole trial occupied twenty-eight days. Schinder-hannes was firm and bold, and even gay. He entertained the hope that he should escape the capital punishment; but on the deposition of the miller's mother of Merxheim, to whose arm the robbers had applied a burning candle to extort her money from her, Schinder-hannes' countenance fell; till then he had succeeded tolerably well in making himself out, a criminal indeed, but one averse to cruelty or the shedding of blood, but at that moment he said, in a sad, despondent tone, "It is all over! I hear the scream of the bird of death!"

The horrid punishment of being broken on the wheel, which had been usually awarded to culprits of his class in that country, now presented itself to his imagination. The boldest might tremble at such a fate! He asked the President whether he was so to suffer? When answered that that species of punishment had been abolished by the French law, he recovered his self-possession, and added—"If I have wished to live, it is only because I intended to become an honest man!" After a short pause, he continued: "But Julia is innocent; I seduced that poor girl; and oh, my poor father! what will become of him?" And during the whole of the trial, he constantly endeavoured to screen his father and his mistress. It appeared, however, in evidence, that Julia had accompanied him in some of his minor expeditions, especially to the house of Isaac, the Jew usurer; and that his parent also had participated in some of his crimes.

After a most patient investigation, Schinder-hannes was found guilty of all the charges, and with nineteen

of his accomplices condemned to death. Fifteen more of the culprits, among whom was Schinder-hannes' father, were sentenced to hard labour in irons, for various terms, from six to twenty-four years; two others, with one of the women, to two years' imprisonment; Julia Blœsus, to two years in the house of correction; and two other women, to be expelled from the French territory. The rest were acquitted.

Schinder-hannes heard the sentence with much indifference, save when he evinced a lively satisfaction on hearing the lenient punishment of his mistress, and that his father's life was to be spared. He asked to speak with the President; but it was not to say one word for himself: it was only to express his hope that his father, his Julia, and his child, might be taken care of after his death.

On the morning of the 21st of November, the day fixed upon for the execution, a clergyman visited the prisoners. Schinder-hannes told him he was resigned to his fate, and respectfully requested him to bestow his spiritual care and consolation on certain of his comrades, who needed them more than he did. He, however, expressed a wish to take the sacrament. When he arrived at the place of execution, he hastily climbed up the scaffold, and examined the guillotine with minute attention: he was curious to know whether its stroke was as prompt and sure as he had been given to understand it was, and put the question with an unflinching tongue. On being answered in the affirmative, he turned round and addressed the crowd: "I have deserved death," said he, "but ten of my companions die innocent!" meaning, probably, that these ten had never been guilty of murder—the only crime, in his idea, that merited death. He then laid his head on the block, and found the transition from this world to the dread unknown, quite as rapid as the executioners told him it would be through

the agency of their apparatus. The subalterns followed their captain, and the execution of the twenty culprits occupied only twenty-six minutes, making one minute eighteen seconds for each man!

The destruction of this daring band cleared the Rhine of robbers; but the inhabitants on the banks of that beautiful river will long retain the traditions of Schinder-hannes.

HUNGARIAN ROBBERS.

THIS story was told me by an Italian officer, who was serving, at the time he first learned it, with the "Grande Armée" of Napoleon. It seems to me to contain one of the most striking, most dramatic, and terrible scenes that can be conceived, and I have only to regret that I lack the talent or power of telling the tale of horror so well as it was told to me.

It was a few weeks before the termination of the short, but (for Austria) fatal campaign of 1809—that campaign which, begun nobly by the Austrians, ended in their seeing Buonaparte dictate to their prostrate empire from their capital, and shortly after claim as his bride the daughter of the sovereign he had so injured and humbled—that an Hungarian horse-dealer left Vienna to return to his home, which was situated in an interior province of his country.

He carried with him, in paper money and in gold, a very considerable sum, the product of the horses he had sold at the Austrian capital. To carry this in safety was a difficult object just at that time; for troops, French and Austrian, were scattered in every direction, and he knew by experience, that it was not always safe to fall in with small parties of soldiers,

even of his own country or government, (to say nothing of the French,) but that Croates, and wild Hussars, and Hulans, and others that fought under the Austrian eagle, were seldom over-scrupulous as to "keeping their hands from picking and stealing," when opportunity was favourable or tempting.

The dealer, however, relied on his minute knowledge of the country he had traversed so often; on the bottom and speed of his thorough-bred Hungarian horse; and having obtained what he considered good information, as to the posts occupied by the belligerents, and the range of country most exposed to the soldiery, he set out from Vienna, which he feared would soon be in the hands of the enemy. He went alone, and on his road carefully avoided, instead of seeking the company of other travellers, for he reasonably judged, that a solitary individual, meanly dressed as he was, might escape notice, while a party of travellers would be sure to attract it.

By his good management he passed the Hungarian frontier unharmed, and continued his journey homeward by a circuitous unfrequented route. On the third night after his departure from Vienna, he stopped at a quiet inn, situated in the suburbs of a small town. He had never been there before, but the house was comfortable, and the appearance of the people about it respectable. Having first attended to his tired horse, he sat down to supper with his host and family. During the meal, he was asked whence he came, and when he had said from Vienna, all present were anxious to know the news. The dealer told them all he knew. The host then inquired what business had carried him to Vienna. He told them he had been there to sell some of the best horses that were ever taken to that market. When he heard this, the host cast a glance at one of the men of the family who seemed to be his son, which the dealer scarcely ob-

served then, but which he had reason to recall afterwards.

When supper was finished, the fatigued traveller requested to be shown to his bed. The host himself took up a light, and conducted him across a little yard at the back of the house to a detached building, which contained two rooms, tolerably decent for an Hungarian hostel. In the inner of these rooms was a bed, and here the host left him to himself. As the dealer threw off his jacket and loosened the girdle round his waist where his money was deposited, he thought he might as well see whether it was all safe. Accordingly, he drew out an old leathern purse that contained his gold, and then a tattered parchment pocket-book that enveloped the Austrian bank notes, and finding that both were quite right, he laid them under the bolster, extinguished the light and threw himself on the bed, thanking God and the saints that had carried him thus far homeward in safety. He had no misgiving as to the character of the people he had fallen amongst to hinder his repose, and the poor dealer was very soon enjoying a profound and happy sleep.

He might have been in this state of beatitude an hour or two, when he was disturbed by a noise like that of an opening window, and by a sudden rush of cool night air; on raising himself on the bed, he saw peering through an open window which was almost immediately above the bed, the head and shoulders of a man, who was evidently attempting to make his ingress into the room that way. As the terrified dealer looked, the intruding figure was withdrawn, and he heard a rumbling noise, and then the voices of several men, as he thought, close under the window. The most dreadful apprehensions, the more horrible as they were so sudden, now agitated the traveller, who, scarcely knowing what he did, but utterly

despairing of preserving his life, threw himself under the bed. He had scarcely done so, when the hard breathing of a man was heard at the open window, and the next moment a robust fellow dropped into the room, and after staggering across it, groped his way by the walls to the bed. Fear had almost deprived the horse-dealer of his senses, but yet he perceived that the intruder, whoever he might be, was drunk. There was, however, slight comfort in this, for he might only have swallowed wine to make him the more desperate, and the traveller was convinced he had heard the voices of other men without, who might climb into the room to assist their brother villain in case any resistance should be made. His astonishment, however, was great and reviving, when he heard the fellow throw off his jacket on the floor, and then toss himself upon the bed under which he lay. Terror, however, had taken too firm a hold of the traveller to be shaken off at once,—his ideas were too confused to permit his imagining any other motive for such a midnight intrusion on an unarmed man with property about him, save that of robbery and assassination, and he lay quiet where he was until he heard the fellow above him snoring with all the sonorousness of a drunkard. Then, indeed, he would have left his hiding-place, and gone to rouse the people in the inn to get another resting-place instead of the bed of which he had been dispossessed in so singular a manner, but, just as he came to this resolution, he heard the door of the outer room open—then stealthy steps cross it—then the door of the very room he was in was softly opened, and two men, one of whom was the host and the other his son, appeared on its threshold.

“Leave the light where it is,” whispered the host, “or it may disturb him and give us trouble.”

“There is no fear of that,” said the younger man,

also in a whisper, "we are two to one; he has nothing but a little knife about him—he is dead asleep too! hear how he snores!"

"Do my bidding," said the old man sternly; "would you have him wake and rouse the neighbourhood with his screams?"

As it was, the horror-stricken dealer under the bed could scarcely suppress a shriek, but he saw that the son left the light in the outer room, and then, pulling the door partially after them to screen the rays of the lamp from the bed, he saw the two murderers glide to the bed-side, and then heard a rustling motion as of arms descending on the bed-clothes, and a hissing, and then a grating sound, that turned his soul sick, for he knew it came from knives or daggers penetrating to the heart or vitals of a human being like himself, and only a few inches above his own body. This was followed by one sudden and violent start on the bed, accompanied by a moan. Then the bed, which was a low one, was bent by an increase of weight caused by one or both the murderers throwing themselves upon it, until it pressed on the body of the traveller. There was an awful silence for a moment or two, and then the host said, "He is finished—I have cut him across the throat—take the money, I saw him put it under his bolster."

"I have it, here it is," said the son; "a purse and a pocket-book."

The traveller was then relieved from the weight that had oppressed him almost to suffocation, and the assassins, who seemed to tremble as they went, ran out of the room, took up the light, and disappeared altogether from the apartment.

No sooner were they fairly gone, than the poor dealer crawled from under the bed, took one desperate leap, and escaped through the little window by which he had seen enter the unfortunate wretch who had

evidently been murdered in his stead. He ran with all his speed into the town, where he told his horrid story and miraculous escape to the night-watch. The night-watch conducted him to the Burgomaster, who was soon aroused from his sleep, and acquainted with all that had happened:

In less than half an hour from the time of his escape from it, the horse-dealer was again at the murderous inn with the magistrate and a strong force of the horror-stricken inhabitants and the night-watch, who had all run thither in the greatest silence. In the house all seemed as still as death, but as the party went round to the stables, they heard a noise; cautioning the rest to surround the inn and the out-houses, the magistrate, with the traveller and some half-dozen armed men, ran to the stable-door—this they opened, and found within the host and his son digging a grave.

The first figure that met the eyes of the murderers was that of the traveller. The effect of this on their guilty souls was too much to be borne; they shrieked and threw themselves on the ground, and though they were immediately seized by hard griping hands of real flesh and blood, and heard the voices of the magistrate and their friends and neighbours denouncing them as murderers, it was some minutes ere they could believe that the figure of the traveller that stood among them was other than a spirit. It was the hardier villain, the father, who, on hearing the stranger's voice continuing in conversation with the magistrate, first gained sufficient command over himself to raise his face from the earth; he saw the stranger still pale and haggard, but evidently unhurt. The murderer's head spun round confusedly, but at length rising, he said to those who held him, "Let me see that stranger nearer; let me touch him—only

let me touch him!" The poor horse-dealer drew back in horror and disgust.

"You may satisfy him in this," said the magistrate, "he is unarmed and unnerved, and we are here to prevent his doing you harm."

On this, the traveller let the host approach him, and pass his hand over his person, which when he had done, the villain exclaimed, "I am no murderer! who says I am a murderer!"

"That shall we see anon," said the traveller, who led the way to the detached apartment, followed by the magistrate, by the two prisoners, and all the party which had collected in the stable on hearing what passed there.

Both father and son walked with considerable confidence into the room, but when they saw by the lamps the night-watch and others held over it, that there was a body covered with blood, lying upon the bed, they cried out "How is this! who is this!" and rushed together to the bed-side. The lights were lowered; their rays fell full upon the ghastly face and bleeding throat of a young man. At the sight, the younger of the murderers turned his head and swooned in silence; but the father, uttering a shriek so loud, so awful, that one of the eternally damned alone might equal its effect, threw himself on the bed and on the gashed and bloody body, and murmuring in his throat, "My son! I have killed mine own son!" also found a temporary relief from the horrors of his situation in insensibility. The next minute, the wretched hostess, who was innocent of all that had passed, and who was, without knowing it, the wife of a murderer, the mother of a murderer, and the mother of a murdered son—of a son killed by a brother and a father, ran to the apartment, and would have increased tenfold its already insupportable horrors by entering there, had she not been

prevented by the honest townspeople. She had been roused from sleep by the noise made in the stable, and then by her husband's shriek, and was now herself, shrieking and frantic, carried back into the inn by main force.

The two murderers were forthwith bound and carried to the town gaol, where, on the examination, which was made the next morning, it appeared from evidence that the person murdered was the youngest son of the landlord of the inn, and a person never suspected of any crime more serious than habitual drunkenness; that instead of being in bed, as his father and brother had believed him, he had stolen out of the house, and joined a party of carousers in the town: of these boon companions, all appeared in evidence, and two of them deposed that the deceased, being exceedingly intoxicated, and dreading his father's wrath, should he rouse the house in such a state, and at that late hour, had said to them that he would get through the window into the little detached apartment, and sleep there, as he had often done before, and that they two had accompanied him, and assisted him to climb to the window. The deceased had reached the window once, and as they thought would have got safe through it, but, drunk and unsteady as he was, he slipped back; they had then some difficulty in inducing him to climb again, for in the caprice of intoxication, he said he would rather go sleep with one of his comrades. However, he had at last effected his entrance, and they, his two comrades, had gone to their respective homes.

The wretched criminals were executed a few weeks after the commission of the crime. They had confessed everything, and restored to the horse-dealer the gold and the paper-money they had concealed, and which had led them to do a deed so much more atrocious than even they had contemplated.

THE ROBBER-KING.

I NOW shift my scenes of murder and devastation to Asia, where the profession of a robber has attained infinitely more eminence, and his depredations have been practised on an incomparably grander scale, than in our parts of the world. Compared, indeed, with the hordes—the hosts—the almost nations of marauders in the East, our most numerous troops of banditti sink into the insignificance of mere gangs. Their crimes, too, are tame and colourless, contrasted with the full fire and glare of Oriental atrocity.

In the earlier ages of the world many a freebooter carved his way to a throne, or to something equivalent to it; and in certain regions of the East, where barbarism has retained or renewed the vices and irregularities of antiquity even in our own days, we see heroes of the same stamp arriving at the same royal dignity.

One of the most extraordinary of these robbers is Nadir, the son of a shepherd of Chorasán, who, on the demise of his father, by the sale of part of his flocks, hired a number of banditti, with whom he scoured and plundered the whole country. With his successes the number of his followers increased, until, after the lapse of a few years, instead of a band of robbers, they represented an army. The disorders and political misfortunes of the kingdom, without which marauders can never raise themselves to extreme importance, were all favourable to Nadir; and as a foreign conquering army, the Afghans had invaded and were in possession of the Persian provinces, he had all the advantages resulting from the commingling of the robber's character with that of

the partisan or patriot—characters which, we have already hinted, are frequently so difficult to separate.

Indeed, in 1722, when the Afghans took Ispahan itself, when the Shah Hussan laid his crown at the feet of the conquerors, and was massacred with all his family, save one son, whose name was Thamas, that fugitive prince fled to the neighbourhood of Tauris, and, among other allies, invited the robber Nadir to his standard. Nadir went and took his banditti with him, and professing to be the most devoted subject of the legitimate Prince, changed his name into that of Thamas Koolee Khan, or Khan the Slave of Thamas.

Such a man found it easy in Persia, and in such a state as the country then was, to increase the number of his followers, whom he subsisted and rewarded by the plunder of the country. For some years his exploits could not aspire to much beyond brigandage; but by degrees he became stronger and stronger, and finally, daring enough to measure swords with the Afghan conqueror himself in the open field. He gained numerous victories, and finally, after seven years, he retook the Persian capital Ispahan, pursued the usurper within his own dominions, vanquished him again, and took him prisoner.

The name of the legitimate Thamas had been a good rallying word; he acknowledged him still as king, but kept him in close confinement, and, governing in his name, turned his arms against the Turks, who had taken advantage of the times to make encroachments on the western provinces of Persia. This war he conducted with his usual success, and feeling his power sufficient to throw off the mask, he put out the eyes of the unfortunate Thamas, and in 1736 proclaimed himself king in his stead, by the title of Nadir-Shah.

The shepherd-robber reigned as an absolute

sovereign for eleven years, and though in 1747 he was massacred in his tent, he had the satisfaction of making the most splendid and extensive conquests in the interim ; of entirely subduing the Afghans, of invading Hindostan, of taking its rich capital Delhi, and of there perpetrating a massacre which has few to surpass it in the register of the dreadful calamities of that nature which have befallen the human race.

THE PINDARRIES.

THE Pindarries were not a distinctive race, but a class of men, of different descent, religion, and habits, gradually associated, and assimilated by a common pursuit. They were all robbers.

The name of Pindarry* first occurs in Indian history about the end of the seventeenth century, but their prominent importance in the pages of that history was reserved for our own days. They were like the first Mahrattas in their habits of life and warfare, but unlike them in not being united by nationality and one religious faith ; in not having the legitimate and permanent motives of attachment to their native soil, and resentment against the intolerant and oppressive rulers (the Mahometan conquerors of India) by whom the Mahrattas were assailed. From obscure freebooters, they rose into sufficient consequence to be deemed useful auxiliaries by the different Mahratta powers, whose desultory mode of warfare was suited to their predatory habits ; and from their preceding

* The most popular etymology of the term Pindarry, among the natives, is, that they derived it from drunken habits leading them constantly to the shops of the sellers of an intoxicating drink termed Pinda. Kurreem-Khan, a notorious Pindarry leader, who delivered himself up to Sir John Malcolm, told that gentleman, he had never heard any other reason given for this name.

or accompanying them in their incursions, the Pindarries became occasionally confounded with the Mahrattas, though they were always considered by the latter as essentially distinct, and so immeasurably inferior as not to be allowed to eat with them, or even to be seated in their presence.

“Their aid,” says Sir John Malcolm, from whom this account is chiefly taken, “was purchased by the Mahrattas, by occasional grants of land, or, more correctly speaking, by a tacit admission of their right to possess tracts, which they had usurped, and a privilege of plundering, even beyond the usual licence given to a Mahratta army. The Pindarries took substantive form under this system; their chiefs acquired reputation, and the claims to the services of their adherents by degrees became hereditary, and were transmitted to their descendants. Tribes were cemented in federal union, and common motives of action led to somewhat of a common interest being established throughout the whole of this community of robbers.”

The very looseness of their composition was favourable to their increase, as it admitted all castes and all faiths, and offered a ready refuge to poverty, indolence, and crime—to all that was floating and unattached in the communities of Central India; and united—and the prospect of plunder would always unite them—the Pindarries presented a mass of materials which, an able and popular leader might use either for the destruction of others, or his own aggrandisement.

The Pindarries have also been compared to the Tartars; but when the Tartars came to a rich and fertile country, they would settle and repose, and their numerous flocks and herds would present pastoral pictures: not so the Pindarries. “Like swarms of locusts, acting from instinct, they destroyed and left

waste whatever province they visited. Their chiefs had, from grants or by usurpation, obtained small territorial possessions ; but the revenues of their land were never equal to the maintenance of one-tenth part of their numbers, and they could, therefore, only be supported by plunder."

What their numbers were could at no time be correctly estimated—they varied with circumstances, being diminished by misfortune and swelled by success.

"It is also to be observed, that the Pindarries were fed and nourished by the very miseries they created ; for as their predatory invasions extended, property became insecure, and those who were ruined by their depredations were afterwards compelled to have recourse to a life of violence, as the only means of subsistence left them. They joined the stream which they could not withstand, and endeavoured to redeem their own losses by the plunder of others."

The mode of robbing pursued by these overgrown bodies of banditti will show at once how difficult it was to intercept or suppress them.

"When they set out on an expedition, they placed themselves under the guidance of one or more chosen leaders, called Lubbiriahs, who were selected on account of their knowledge of the country that it was meant to plunder. The Pindarries were neither encumbered with tents nor baggage ; each horseman carried a few cakes of bread for his own subsistence, and some feeds of grain for his horse. The party, which usually consisted of two or three thousand good horse, with a proportion of mounted followers, advanced at the rapid rate of forty or fifty miles a day, neither turning to the right nor left till they arrived at their place of destination. They then divided and made a sweep of all the cattle and property they could find : committing at the same time the most horrid atrocities,

and destroying what they could not carry away. They trusted to the secrecy and suddenness of the irruption for avoiding those who guarded the frontiers of the countries they invaded; and before a force could be brought against them, they were on their return. Their chief strength lay in their being intangible. If pursued, they made marches of extraordinary length, (sometimes upwards of sixty miles,) by roads almost impracticable for regular troops. If overtaken, they dispersed, and re-assembled at an appointed rendezvous; if followed to the country from which they issued, they broke into small parties.

“ Their wealth, their booty, and their families, were scattered over a wide region, in which they found protection amid the mountains, and in the fastnesses belonging to themselves and to those with whom they were either openly or secretly connected; but nowhere did they present any point of attack; and the defeat of a party, the destruction of one of their cantonments, or the temporary occupation of some of their strongholds, produced no effect, beyond the ruin of an individual freebooter, whose place was instantly supplied by another, generally of more desperate fortune, and therefore more eager for enterprise.”

The instances of romantic courage, of humanity, and even of romantic generosity, (exaggerated, no doubt, by popular credulity and our love of the marvellous,) which frequently chequer the narratives of other desperate bands of depredators, could hardly be expected to occur in associations composed and disposed like that of the Pindarries. Even when acting with the Mahrattas, as auxiliaries, their object was to plunder, not to fight. They went before, indeed, but it was only by surprise, or in defenceless provinces; they were, from their very origin, the scavengers of the Mahrattas, and, though in the van, had little more

pretension to martial conduct or valour, than had the birds and the beasts of prey that followed in their and their allies' rear. It must be said, however, that though not one of these marauders ever succeeded in establishing a claim to high reputation, but all appeared to have shared in the ignorance, the meanness, the rapacity, and brutal cruelty by which they were distinguished as a body, that some of their chiefs, (the celebrated Cheetoo in particular,) united with the qualities, so essential to his profession, of activity, cunning, and ready enterprise, a wonderful strength of mind in bearing the reverses of fortune, and the privations of his lot.

The audacity of their enterprise, the cunning and skill of their execution, their lightning-like rapidity, their dexterity, do, however, create almost as great an interest, as is excited by the valour in combat of others, and are altogether as romantic:—in proof of which, the following story is sufficient.

In December 1816, a few days before a signal defeat inflicted by the English on the main body of the Pindarries, who were obliged to retreat with the loss of the greater part of their horses and booty; one leader, indignant at the want of energy betrayed by those vested with the chief command of the expedition, abandoned it altogether, and led off about four hundred men to act for himself. He dashed across the Peshwa's territory, descended into the Konkan by the Amba-ghaut in the western range, and thence shaped his course due north, plundering the western shores of India, from the seventeenth to the twenty-first degree of north latitude, and returning by the valley of the Taptee, and the route of Boorhanpoor. This was the only expedition that evaded the British, and succeeded this season. The only loss he sustained was on his return to the river Nerbudda, in the following March. Here he was within a few miles

of home, but he found the ford by which he hoped to cross to join the great Pindarry chief Cheetoo's durra, guarded by a redoubt, occupied by a party of our sepoys. Several of his men were shot in attempting to dash across; but the chief himself, with his main body, and best mounted followers, retiring from the ford, boldly swam the river lower down, though not without a further loss of men and horses. Those who had worse horses, or less courage, dispersed, and fled into the jungle on the English side of the river, where the greater part were cut off by the wild inhabitants of the neighbourhood. The rest, however, reached their strongholds with a rich booty in their saddles; and the brilliancy of the achievement added even more to their reputation, than its success had done to their wealth*.

The Pindarry who conducted this astonishing enterprise, the hardihood and marvellousness of which will be better understood by a reference to the geography and the maps of India, was named Sheik Dullo. He seems to have been the most adventurous of all the chiefs. The year after, when he saw himself, with the rest of the Pindarries, closely pressed by the English, and that matters were becoming desperate on the banks of the Nerbudda, he proposed joining Trimbukjee at Choolee-Muheshwur, and seeking his fortune in another expedition to the Deccan.

Cheetoo, who has been more than once mentioned, first attracted the attention of the English in India towards the end of 1806. When raising himself on the temporary ruin of Kureem, another Pindarry chief, who had been inveigled and made a prisoner by Sindheea, a Mahratta potentate, he united the durras of many other leaders under his standard, and prepared to make depredations, or to carry on an incursive war on a grand scale.

* Prinsep's Hist. Trans. in India, vol. i. p. 400—1.

Numerous and profitable were the expeditions of this wholesale robber, undertaken on his own account; but in 1811, the captive Pindarry Kureem, purchasing his liberty from Sindheea, returned to the scenes of his former power, and soon obtained his former supremacy. Kureem immediately raised fresh levies of infantry; the chiefs soon rallied round his standard, and he laid his plans to effect a general combination of all the Pindarries for a predatory expedition of extraordinary moment. Cheetoo was obliged to follow the example of his fellow-chieftains, and at the Dussera of 1811, his durra made part of 25,000 cavalry of all descriptions, that were ready, under the command of Kureem, to march against and plunder Nagpoor. But Cheetoo hated Kureem as a rival: he sold himself to his enemies, and went over to them with his troops. Not long after he defeated Kureem, and obliged him to flee with his adherents to a distant country. Cheetoo again shone forth on his rival's eclipse, and at his cantonment of Nemawur, not less than 15,000 horse annually assembled, to issue forth to plunder under leaders of his nomination, in whatever direction he might prescribe.

The anomalous but vast power of these Pindarry freebooters had been gradually growing up since 1805-6. "Its leading feature was hostility to all regular governments, and of course most particularly against the English and their allies, whose territories offered the richest booty. The existence of these hordes imposed the necessity of constant vigilance along the whole extent of the south-west frontier of the Bengal Presidency; while, for the security of the Deccan, the subsidiary forces of the Nizam and Peshwa were annually obliged to move to the northern frontier of their respective territories; notwithstanding which precautions, the dominions of those

States were constantly penetrated and overrun by the marauders *."

These Pindarries did not pretend to cope with governments, or to establish themselves in the regions they invaded; their object was general rapine; they preyed upon the people at large; their form and constitution were framed with a view to this exclusive purpose, and when they had fulfilled the object of their excursion, they retired, as they had approached, like robbers.

In 1814, the Supreme Government of India, alarmed at the formidable and still augmenting power of these predatory associations, made representations to the home authorities, and requested their sanction to a systematic combination of measures for the suppression of the evil. Some treaties were set on foot by the English with various neighbouring Indian Princes who might have guarded the approaches to our territories and those of our allies: but their jealousies, and a covert design of forming a general combination of the Mahratta powers against us, defeated the negotiations, when under-defensive measures were taken by ourselves.

These measures, however, could not prevent a body of nearly eight thousand of Cheetoo's Pindarries from crossing the Nerbudda in October 1815; after which passage they broke up into two parties. Major Fraser, indeed, with three hundred native disciplined infantry, and a hundred irregular horse, surprised them in a bivouac, and made them suffer some loss before they could mount, gallop off, and disperse. But this did not deter them from continuing their depredations as far as the banks of the Kishna. The other party, which had met with no such molestation, traversed the vast territory of our ally the

* History of Transactions in India, during the Administration of the Marquess of Hastings, by Henry T. Prinsep.

Nizam, from north to south, and also appeared most unexpectedly on the banks of the Kishna. The territories of our Madras Presidency lay on the other side of the river, and were saved from devastation only by the fortuitous circumstance of the river's continuing not fordable for horses so unusually late as the 20th of November. "The freebooters then took a turn eastward, plundering the country for several miles along the populous and fertile bank of the river, and committing every kind of enormity. On approaching the frontier of Masulipatam, they shaped their course northward, and returned along the line of the Godavaree and Wurda, passing to the east of all the English defensive positions, and making good their route to Nemawur, (their head-quarters, where their chief Cheetoo expected their return,) with an immense booty collected in the Nizam's dominions, and with utter impunity." The plunder obtained in this *luhbur*, or raid, was said to be greater than that of any previous expedition.

"Elated at this success, a second expedition was planned and proclaimed by Cheetoo, very soon after the return of the first. Pindarries again flocked in from every durra to join in it; and by the 5th of February 1816, ten thousand, under different leaders, had again crossed from Nemawur.

This time the Company's territory did not escape. After marches of extraordinary rapidity, the freebooters arrived at our civil station of Guntoor on the 12th of March, having plundered and massacred during the whole of their journey.

"The government treasure here, and the persons of the British residents, were protected at the collector's office by the exertions of a few troops and invalids kept at the station for civil duties. It being no part of the design of the Pindarries to risk the loss of time or lives, they immediately moved off with what they

could get; and before night there was not a single strange horseman in the neighbourhood. The whole had hurried off westward, making a march of fifty-two miles in that direction the next day. This body of marauders continued, on the whole, twelve days within the Company's frontier; and, after leaving Guntoor, swept through part of the Kupa district, and recrossed the Kishna on the 22nd of March. A squadron of the Madras 4th Native cavalry arrived on the opposite bank of the river, just after they had made good their passage. A considerable force was in the field a little to the west, but though it sent out detachments in every direction, and others were despatched from Hyderabad in their rear, the plunderers escaped from all with impunity. After recrossing the Kishna, the luhbur seems by agreement to have separated into several bodies, in order the better to baffle pursuit and scour the country."

In a manner that seems almost incredible, they perfectly succeeded in both; and "it was ascertained that nearly the whole of those Pindarries who had passed the Nerbudda in February had recrossed before the 17th of May, bringing a second immense harvest of booty within the year, and without having suffered any loss worthy of mention. Some idea may be formed of the extent of ravage and cruelty which marked the track of these banditti, from what was found to be the damage sustained by the Company's districts during the twelve days that they remained within the frontier. It was ascertained by a committee, sent to the spot for the express purpose of investigating, that three hundred and thirty-nine villages had been plundered, one hundred and eighty-two individuals put to a cruel death, five hundred and five severely wounded, and no less than three thousand six hundred and three had been subjected to different kinds of torture.

Unable as they had been to intercept them in their retreat, the British, having taken the most energetic measures, appeared on the banks of the Nerbudda, which may be considered as the frontier river of the Pindarries, to prevent any further incursion on their part, by the month of October following.

This first appearance of a British army (weak though it was!) in the valley of the Nerbudda, spread consternation amongst the Pindarries; and the leader Cheetoo, who occupied a cantonment on the opposite side of the river, immediately withdrew with all his own durra.

Emboldened, however, by observing that the English did not cross the Nerbudda to attack them, the Pindarries, after suffering some weeks of abeyance, came to the resolution of pushing small parties across the river, which were to insinuate themselves between the posts, or to turn the flanks of the British line, when they were to pursue the same system of predatory incursion as before. In their first attempt the robbers were beaten back, but on the 13th of November, while Cheetoo remained in force to the west, large bodies moved with their usual rapidity up the river to the east, "and upwards of five thousand passed the river in sight of the infantry post, on the extreme right of the British line, with a rapidity of movement, which baffled the efforts of the infantry to impede or harass their march. In this manner the passage was effected by others in sufficient numbers to form two luhburs or expeditions." Owing to the admirable arrangements made, and to the almost equally wonderful activity of the British, and to sundry other causes, these raids were far from being so successful as the preceding. An immense number of the Pindarries were beaten and thrown back in their advance; other hosts cut off in their retreat; and we must entertain a despicable notion of their

bravery, when we see them continually fleeing from a handful of men, and beaten every time they are met with. Still, however, their depredations this year embraced a more ample expanse of territory than had ever before been attempted, extending from shore to shore of the peninsula of India, and including all the intermediate provinces they had omitted the preceding year.

The following year (1817), after making several unsuccessful attempts at incursions, the Pindarries were hard pressed by the British and their allies, who under Sir John Malcolm, General Marshall, and Colonel Adams, crossed the Nerbudda about the middle of November, and drove the freebooters entirely out of their usual haunts. Cheetoo retreated westward with his accustomed celerity towards Holkur's forces, which had already taken the field. Holkur received him with friendship and distinction, admitting him to an audience, and allowing him to pitch his camp close to his own. The robber could not, however, long enjoy the benefit of this alliance, for Holkur was induced to conclude a friendly treaty with the British. Immediately after this, as Cheetoo was considered by far the most dangerous of the Pindarry chiefs, Sir William Keir, with a fresh division of our army, was sent in pursuit of him, and succeeded in partially cutting up his durrâ in the neighbourhood of Satoolla.

Harassed by the activity of Sir William's pursuit, the marauders endeavoured to retrace their steps to their haunts in Malwa, and in the valley of the Nerbudda. Cheetoo succeeded in baffling every effort made to overtake him, and effected his object by penetrating through a most difficult country to the south of Mewur. He suddenly reappeared near Dhar, where a very high range of hills sends forth the streams which form the Mhye, a considerable river

emptying itself into the Gulf of Kambay. In this extraordinary march he was obliged to disencumber himself of his baggage, and lost many of his horses.

He was now lost sight of for some time. Meanwhile the best of his fellow-chiefs, with their durras, had been annihilated by the British. As for his own durra, though it had suffered much in detail, it was still strong, having, under his wonderful guidance, escaped a rencontre with any of our forces in the open field. But his active enemies were gathering closer and closer around his last lair, and were no longer to be avoided.

On the night of the 25th January, 1818, a strong party of the British came upon him, near Kurnod, and utterly broke up his band. The Bheels and Grasseas (robbers by birth, education, and profession, but "petty-larceny rascals" compared to the Pindarries) were encouraged to plunder and destroy the fugitives—a commission they executed with becoming zeal!

Cheetoo, however, escaped Bheels and Grasseas, as he had so often the English, and for a short time wandered about Malwa, with some two hundred followers. His affairs, however, became every day more desperate. Sir John Malcolm, in his account of Malwa, gives the following little anecdote regarding Cheetoo, precisely at this time of his extreme difficulties. (It must be remembered that the sea is called by all the natives of central India "Kala Panee" (black water), and that they have the most terrible ideas of it and the countries beyond it.)

"When Cheetoo, the Pindarry chief, was flying in hopeless misery from the English, he was often advised by his followers to surrender to their mercy. He was possessed, however, by the dreadful idea that they would transport him beyond the seas, and this was more hideous to him than death. These fol-

lowers, who all, one after another, came in and obtained pardon, related, that during their Captain's short and miserable sleep, he used continually to murmur "Kala panee! kala panee!" (the Black Sea! O, the Black Sea!)

At this conjuncture it struck Cheetoo that the Nuwab of Bhopal, one of our allies, might make terms for himself and his few remaining followers with the English; and rapidly acting on this idea, he suddenly entered the camp of the Nuwab, who was astonished beyond measure at his boldness.

"But when Cheetoo learned from the Nuwab that he had nothing to offer, beyond a slender personal maintenance in some distant part of Hindostan, while he demanded a Jageer in Malwa, and the entertainment of himself and men in the British service, he decamped as suddenly as he had come. While he stayed, his horses were constantly saddled, and the men slept with the bridles in their hands, ready to fly instantly, in case of an attempt to seize them. Preparations were making for the purpose the very night he went off; but he was too well on his guard, and too much alive to suspicion, to allow them to be completed. He was, however, instantly pursued by the Nuwab's people; and General Malcolm also sent out parties to take him, which distressed him so much that Rajun, one of his most faithful and valuable adherents, left him, and made his submission. Yet Cheetoo subsequently found his way into Kandès and the Deccan, and made common cause with the marauding Arabs and chiefs of the Peshwa's routed army, with whom he became assimilated, receiving occasional protection from the Kiladar of the fortress of Aseerguhr. His durra was now completely destroyed; his followers, one by one, had almost entirely deserted him; but nothing could subdue the robber's spirit, or induce him to surrender. His end, how-

ever, approached, and it was tragical and singular. Having joined Apa-Saheb, he passed the rainy season of 1818 in the mountainous heights of the Mohadeo range; and upon that chief's expulsion, in February 1819, accompanied him to the fort of Aseerguhr. Being refused admittance to the fort, he sought shelter in a neighbouring jungle, and, on horseback and alone, attempted to penetrate a thick cover, known to be infested by tigers. He was missed for some days after, and no one knew what had become of him. His horse was at last discovered grazing, near the margin of the forest, saddled and bridled, and exactly in the state in which it was when Cheetoo had last been seen upon it. Upon search, a bag of two hundred and fifty rupees was found in the saddle; and several seal rings, with some letters of Apa-Saheb, promising future reward, served more completely to fix the identity of the horse's late master. These circumstances, combined with the known resort of tigers to the spot, induced a search for the body, when, at no great distance, some clothes clotted with blood, and, farther on, fragments of bones, and at last the robber's head entire, with the features in a state to be recognised, were successively discovered. The chief's mangled remains were given over to his son for interment, and the miserable fate of one, who so shortly before had ridden at the head of twenty thousand horse, gave an awful lesson of the uncertainty of fortune, and drew pity even from those who had been the victims of his barbarity when living*."

This Eastern robber had himself outlived the curious but abominable association to which he had belonged. Their name, and the melancholy traces of their devastation, which are fast disappearing under re-established order and industry, are all that

* Prinsep.

remain of the Pindarries, whose dis-appearance from the scenes of India cannot be more appropriately described than in the words of Sir John Malcolm, to whom we are indebted for the account of their rise and institutions, and who was himself the principal agent in bringing about their fall.

“There now,” says that gallant officer and able writer, “remains not a spot in India that a Pindarry can call his home. They have been hunted like wild beasts; numbers have been killed; all ruined. Those who adopted their cause have fallen. They were early in the contest shunned like a contagion, and even the timid villagers, whom they so recently oppressed, were among the foremost to attack them. Their principal leaders have either died, submitted, or been made captives; while their followers, with the exception of a few, whom the liberality and consideration of the British Government have aided to become industrious, are lost in that population, from whose dross they originally issued. A minute investigation only can discover these once formidable disturbers, concealed as they now are, among the lowest classes, where they are making some amends for past atrocities, by the benefit which is derived from their labour in restoring trade and cultivation. These freebooters had none of the prejudices of caste, for they belonged to all tribes. They never had either the pride of soldiers, of family, or of country, so that they were bound by none of those ties, which, among many of the communities in India, assume an almost indestructible character. Other plunderers may arise from distempered times; but, as a body, the Pindarries are so effectually destroyed, that their name is already almost forgotten, though not five years are passed since it spread terror and dismay over all India*.”

* Memoir of Central India, vol. i. chap. x.

TRIMBUKJEE.

THIS man, of the turbulent race of the Mahrattas, was almost as extraordinary, and as much of a brigand, as the Pindarry who would have sought his alliance. He had risen from the meanest origin, by the basest arts. He was first a menial servant—then a companion in gross debauchery, favourite, and prime minister—to Bajee Rao Peshwa, a powerful Mahratta Prince, with whom the English were brought in contact. He was ambitious enough to contemplate a general rising of the Mahrattas, to be headed and directed by him against our power in India, and to end in the restoration of the Mahratta empire to its pristine splendour. He murdered, almost within the holy temple, Gungudher Shastree, the Gykwar minister, our friend, and under our immediate protection. The murderer was for a while protected by his master the Peshwa, but finally given up on energetic demonstrations on the part of the British; and this measure stopped the march of a formidable band of marauders, horse and foot, who were coming to join Trimbukjee. He was carried off to our fortress of Tannah in Salsette, where he was kept in close confinement. The better to take care of him, the fort was entirely garrisoned by European troops, of whom a guard constantly watched his personal movements. But this precaution was the very cause of his escape. After he had been some time in confinement, an Indian made his appearance at the fort, offering his services as sâees or horse-keeper, and was engaged by the officer commanding there. This native groom was observed to be very fond of singing. Whenever he led his horses by Trimbukjee's prison door, or under

the terrace where the murderer was allowed to take exercise, like another Blondel he used to chant, and as the words of his song were in the Mahratta language, the English sentries could not understand them, and did not suspect any evil from so common an amusement. But one night, when Trimbukjee had retired to a privy, and left the sentry with the light in his hand outside of the door, the motive of so much music was found out—but too late; for, impatient at being detained so long, on the soldier's opening the door, there was no prisoner there; but they found a hole in the wall of the unclean recess which communicated on the other side with a stable where the sâees had kept his horses. The night was dark and rainy: Trimbukjee had slipped off his clothes, and crossed the rampart by a rope previously attached to one of the guns, before the alarm was given within the fortress, and thus gained the narrow and shallow channel that separates Salsette from the Mahratta territories, before measures could be taken to intercept his flight—of which, it need hardly be added, the sâees was a companion. His master the Peshwa, who was as great a rogue as himself, abetted his concealment; and in the following year Trimbukjee raised a formidable insurrection in the Mohadeo hills, levying troops among the disaffected to the British, and among all the brigands of the neighbourhood. As the Peshwa still approved of all his favourite's measures, and put himself in a hostile posture, nothing was left but a recurrence to arms. The result of this was the entire destruction of the ambitious Mahratta Prince, who was sent prisoner to Bithoor, where he continues, or till lately continued, amusing himself with pilgrimages, to wash himself, like a devout Brahmin, in the holy waters of the Ganges. His favourite's fate was a harder one. Mr. Elphinstone succeeded in seizing him shortly after the

Peshwa's defeat. He was at first remanded to Tannah, the place of his former confinement, but ultimately brought round to Bengal, and lodged in the mountain fortress of Chunar, which, and its inmate, are thus described by Bishop Heber, who was there on the 11th of September, 1824.

“ On the top of the rock of Chunar, and within the rampart, is a considerable space, covered with remarkably fine English hay grass, now nearly ripe for cutting, several noble spreading trees, and some excellent houses for the officers, few of whom, however, when not on duty, remain here; the reflection of the sun on the rock being very powerful, and the expense of bringing up water great. Within this principal circle, and on a still higher point, are two inner fortifications, one containing the governor's house, the hospital, and the state-prison, now inhabited by the celebrated Mahratta chieftain Trimbukjee, long the inveterate enemy of the British power, and the fomentor of all the troubles in Berar, Malwah, and the Deccan. He is confined with great strictness, having a European as well as a Sepoy guard, and never being trusted out of the sight of the sentries. Even his bedchamber has three grated windows opening into the verandah which serves as a guard-room. In other respects he is well treated, has two large and very airy apartments, a small building fitted up as a pagoda, and a little garden, shaded with a peepul-tree, which he has planted very prettily with balsams and other flowers. Four of his own servants are allowed to attend him, but they are always searched before they quit or return to the fort, and must be always there at night. He is a little, lively, irritable-looking man, dressed, when I saw him, in a dirty cotton mantle, with a broad red border, thrown carelessly over his head and shoulders. I was introduced to him by Colonel Alexander, and he received me courteously, observing

that he himself was a priest, and, in token of his brotherly regard, plucking some of his prettiest flowers for me. He then showed me his garden and pagoda, and after a few common-place expressions of the pleasure I felt in seeing so celebrated a warrior, which he answered by saying, with a laugh, he should have been glad to make my acquaintance elsewhere, I made my bow, and took leave. He has now been, I believe, five years in prison, and seems likely to remain there during life, or till the death of his patron and tool, the Peshwa, may lessen his power of doing mischief. He has often offered to give security to any amount for his good behaviour, and to become a warmer friend to the Company than he has ever been their enemy, but his applications have been in vain. He attributes their failure to Mr. Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay, who is, he says, 'his best friend, and worst enemy,' the faithful trustee of his estate, treating his children with parental kindness, and interesting himself, in the first instance, to save his life, but resolutely fixed on keeping him in prison, and urging the Supreme Court to distrust all his protestations. His life must now be dimly monotonous and wearisome. Though a Brahmin of high caste, and so long a minister of state, and the commander of armies, he can neither write nor read, and his whole amusement consists in the ceremony of his idolatry, his garden, and the gossip which his servants pick up for him in the town of Chunar. Avarice seems at present his ruling passion. He is a very severe inspector of his weekly accounts, and one day set the whole garrison in an uproar about some ghee which he accused his khânsaman, or steward, of embezzling; in short, he seems less interested with the favourable reports which he from time to time receives of his family, than with the banking accounts by which they are accompanied. Much as he is said

to have deserved his fate, as a murderer, an extortioner, and a grossly perjured man, I hope I may be allowed to pity him*.”

THE HIGHLANDERS OF INDIA, OR THE ROHILLA
ROBBERS †.

THE following account, which is also from the pen of the lamented Bishop Heber, is replete with interest, and offers one passage, than which nothing can well be more impressive and dramatic. It is, moreover, strictly confirmatory of what has been already several times advanced in this work: that, as justice and mildness of government wean men from rapine and crime, so do tyranny and oppression drive men to them; and when, under the latter circumstances, the nature of the country is favourable, abounding in forests and mountain recesses, and touching on the confines of another State, an extensive system of brigandage will almost invariably result.

“The conquest of Rohilcund by the English, and the death of its chief in battle, its consequent cession to the Nawab of Oude, and the horrible manner in which Sujah ud Dowlah oppressed and misgoverned it, form one of the worst chapters of English history in India. We have since made the Rohillas some amends by taking them away from Oude, and governing them ourselves; but, by all I could learn, the

* Narrative of a Journey, &c. vol. i. p. 495.

† The district which gave its name to the Rohillas, a people once considerable in the history of British India, is said to have been the original seat of the Afghans, whose mountainous country (Roh signifies a mountainous country, and Rohillas, mountaineers or highlanders) extended, in length from Sewad and Bijore to the town of Sia, in Bukharest, and in breadth from Hussin to Rabul. —See Major Stewart's Bengal.

people appear by no means to have forgotten or forgiven their first injuries.”

Their insubordination and violence are favoured by the nature of the locality just alluded to—their province is in the immediate neighbourhood of Oude, and a vast forest exists along the whole of their eastern, southern, and northern frontiers.

“In this forest a great Rohilla robber, or rebel chief, is by many supposed to have lurked the last seven years, for whose apprehension Government have vainly offered no less a sum than 10,000 rupees. Many robberies are, certainly, still perpetrated in his name; but the opinion of the magistrates at Shahjehanpoor is, that the man is really dead, and that his name only, like that of Captain Rock, remains as the rallying point of mutiny. The military officers of our dinner-party had often been in this forest, which they describe as extensive, and in some places very picturesque, with some few tracts of high land, whence, even in this neighbourhood, the snowy range of Himalaya is visible.

“The Rohilla insurgents are usually very faithful to each other, and, as in Oude there is neither police nor pursuit, it very seldom happens, if they once escape, that they can be laid hold of afterwards. One of the most notorious of them, who had long eluded justice, came into the hands of Government not long since, under very singular circumstances. He had passed over into Oude, and bought a zemindarrie there, which was last year seized on, under circumstances of excessive injustice, by the servants of the king’s favourite, who, at the same time, carried off one of his wives. The zemindar, equally highly-spirited and desperate with Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh under similar circumstances, rode immediately to Lucknow, scaled, by the assistance of his servants, the wall of the minister’s private garden, and waited there well

armed, but alone, till his enemy should make his appearance. The minister did not himself appear, but his two youngest sons came out to walk with their ayahs*. The Rohilla knew them, pounced on them like a tiger, and, holding them between his knees, told the terrified women to go and call their master. The palace was soon in an uproar, but he sat still, with his back against the wall, the infants under his knees, and a pistol in each hand, calling out, 'Draw near, and they are both dead.' The minister wept and tore his flesh, promising him everything if he would let them go; to which he answered, 'The restoration of my wife, my own safety, and the guarantee of the British Resident for both!' The Rohilla's woman was immediately brought out, and the minister went like one frantic to the English residency, begging, for God's sake, either Mr. Rickets or Major Raper to go with him. The latter went, and the Rohilla, after a horrible pause, in which he seemed still to be weighing the sweetness of revenge against the promises held out to him, rose, took his wife by the hand, and led her away. He was not, however, satisfied with the security of his continuance in Oude, but soon after surrendered himself to the British, saying that he must look forward to a confinement of some time, but he preferred their severities to the tender mercies of the minister, who, in spite of his promises, had, he was convinced, already laid snares for him. He is now a prisoner in the castle of Allahabad, but it is generally believed that he has made his peace, and that his confinement will not be a long one, though his offences before were serious enough."

Our sepoy's that are scattered in strong detachments up and down this lawless district, have, generally, plenty of work on their hands, what with the wilful-

* Nurses or governesses.

ness of the Rohillas in refusing to attend to the decrees or decisions of Government, in matters of disputed property, and “an inveterate habit of ‘lifting’ cows and sheep, which the beggarly zemindars and idle long-legged ‘gillies’ of one village are apt to feel a pride in exercising against those of the next.”

The Rohillas seem particularly addicted to horse-stealing, and to long-tailed horses. “Take care of that long-tailed horse of yours!” was the first caution the Bishop received. “Keep him carefully at night, under the sentry’s eye, or you will never carry him over the ferry of Anopshehr!” The second horse of the amiable prelate’s being a short-tailed one, was supposed to be safe.

MEWATTIES.—BHEELS.—BAUGRIES.—MOGHIES.—
GWARRIAHS.—THUGS.

THE Pindarries, whose modes of life and atrocities I have endeavoured to sketch, might have been thought of themselves a curse sufficient for any country, however vast, seeing, as we have done, with what rapidity and to what immense distances they were accustomed to extend their incursions. But, besides these hordes, Central India was devastated by other associations of wretches, who for the most part subsisted entirely on plunder. Some of them seem to have struck their baneful roots in the country long ago, others to have arisen under the Mahratta system, and the times of revolution and trouble, which would naturally tend to give strength to the old and birth to the new—and facilities to the execrable operations of all. Sir John Malcolm has described, in a striking manner, the desolation which ensued from letting loose a population composed of such iniquitous materials. Only

those who resided in walled towns were safe from the ravages and massacres of the banditti. The state of the unprotected parts of the country near the Vindyha mountains and the river Nerbudda, where hundreds of villages were seen deserted and roofless, is described by Captain Ambrose, one of Sir John Malcolm's officers: in the year 1818, he ascertained the names, and the names of the villages they belonged to, of eighty-four individuals who had been killed by tigers; these ferocious animals having literally usurped the country and fought with the returning inhabitants for their fields. Authentic documents also testify that in the state of Holkur, in 1817, sixteen hundred and sixty-three villages were deserted, or, as the natives emphatically term it, "without a lamp"—a phrase that denotes the extreme of desolation. All this ruin had been effected by the banditti of Central India, and to Britons is due the cessation of such misery, and the restoration of the country to prosperity and peace*.

To proceed with these other robbers, in the order I have set them down:

The Mewatties are, or were (for happily we can use the past tense in almost all these cases!) an ambiguous race, half Mahometan, half Hindoo, who were not only robbers and assassins, but, according to Sir John Malcolm, the most desperate rogues in India. It is delightful to learn from Bishop Heber that they were in a great measure reclaimed, even when he travelled through the scenes of their crimes, which he did with perfect safety; and to contrast this with

* In 1818 the number of villages restored was two hundred and sixty-nine; in 1819, three hundred and forty-three; and in 1820, five hundred and eight; leaving only five hundred and forty-three deserted, of which the whole are long ere this re-peopled. This was all done under the influence of the British, whose benefits conferred upon humanity in India are as a thousand to one in the scale against their injustice and injuries.

the former state of the country, when it was as dangerous as the interior of Arabia is at this moment, and when merchants were obliged to travel in caravans, and to pay high rates for protection to every paltry plundering Raja. "This neighbourhood," says the Bishop, speaking of part of the province of Delhi, "is still but badly cultivated; but fifteen years ago it was as wild as the Terrai, as full of tigers, and with no human inhabitants but banditti. Cattle-stealing still prevails to a considerable extent, but the Mewatties are now most of them subject either to the British Government or that of Bhurtpoor, and the security of life and property afforded them by the former has induced many of the tribes to abandon their fortresses, to seat themselves in the plain, and cultivate the ground like honest men and good subjects*."

The Bheels, who inhabit the wild and mountainous tracts which separate Malwa from Nemaour and Guzerat, are a totally distinct race, insulated in their abodes, and separated by their habits, usages, and forms of worship, from all other tribes of India. According to Bishop Heber, they were unquestionably the original inhabitants of Rajpootana, and driven to their fastnesses and desperate and miserable way of life by the invasion of those tribes, wherever they may have come from, who profess the religion of Brahma. "This the Rajpoots themselves virtually allow, by admitting, in their traditional history, that most of their principal cities and fortresses were founded by such or such Bheel chiefs, and conquered from them by the children of the sun†."

Here we have again, as it were, the Gael retreating from the Sassenach, and indemnifying and avenging himself by foray, blood, and plunder.

Thieves and savages as they were, the British offi-

* Narrative of a Journey, &c., vol. ii. p. 323. † Id. p. 495.

cers who conversed with Bishop Heber thought them on the whole a better race than their conquerors. Their word is said to be more to be depended on; they are of a franker and livelier character; their women are far better treated and enjoy more influence; and though they shed blood without scruple in cases of feud, or in the regular way of a foray, they are not vindictive or inhospitable under other circumstances, and several British officers have, with perfect safety, gone hunting and fishing in their country, without escort or guide, except what these poor savages themselves cheerfully furnished for a little brandy.

“In a Sanscrit vocabulary, seven hundred or more years old, the term Bheel denotes a particular race of barbarians living on plunder; and the Mahabharat, an ancient Hindoo poem, gives the same description of them. At all times formidable, they became the general terror of Central India under the guidance of Nadir Sing. This chief committed a murder, or rather caused it to be committed. The English had now the power of administering justice, and the following instance, which occurred on the trial of Nadir Sing, is strongly characteristic of the Bheel race.

“During the examination into the guilt of Nadir, when taking the evidence of some female prisoners, it appeared that the father and husband of one of them, a girl about fourteen years of age, had been instruments in committing the murder of which Nadir was accused. She was asked if they put the deceased to death? ‘Certainly they did,’ was her firm reply; ‘but they acted by our Dhunnee’s (or lord’s) order.’

“‘That may be true,’ it was remarked, ‘but it does not clear them; for it was not an affray; it was a deed perpetrated in cold blood.’

“‘Still,’ said the girl, ‘they had the chief’s order!’

“The person* conducting the examination shook his head, implying it would not be received in justification. The child, for she was hardly more, rose from the ground where she was sitting, and pointing to two sentries who guarded them, and were standing at the door of the room, exclaimed, with all the animation of strong feeling, ‘These are your soldiers; you are their Dhunnee; your words are their laws; if you order them this moment to advance, and put me, my mother, and cousin, who are now before you, to death, would they hesitate in slaying three female Bheels? If we are innocent, would you be guilty of our blood, or these faithful men?’ After this observation she re-seated herself, saying, ‘My father and husband are Nadir’s soldiers †.’”

The chiefs of the Bheels, indeed, who were usually called Bhomeahs, exercised the most absolute power, and their orders to commit the most atrocious crimes were obeyed, (as among the sectaries of the Old Man of the Mountain,) by their ignorant but attached subjects, without a conception, on their part, that they had an option. But Nadir Sing was banished for the murder alluded to; his son, who had been carefully educated at Sir John Malcolm’s head-quarters, succeeded to his authority, and there is now no part of the country where life and property are safer than amid the late dreaded Bheels of his father.

The Bheels excite the horror of the higher classes of Hindoos, by eating, not only the flesh of buffaloes, but of cows; an abomination which places them just above the *Chumars*, or shoemakers, who feast on dead carcasses, and are not allowed to dwell within the precincts of the village. The wild Bheels, who keep

* Sir John Malcolm himself. He was assisted on the trial by Captain D. Stuart, who noted down the girl’s expressions.

† Memoir of Central India, vol. i. p. 550.

among the hills, are a diminutive and wretched-looking race, but active, and capable of great fatigue; they go armed with bows and arrows, and are still professed robbers and thieves, lying in wait for the weak and unprotected, while they fly from the strong. Their excesses, however, are now chiefly indulged in against the Hindoos. "A few months since," says Bishop Heber, "one of the bazaars of Neemuch was attacked and plundered by a body of the 'hill-people;' and there are, doubtless, even in the plains, many who still sigh after their late anarchy, and exclaim, amid the comforts of a peaceable government,

'Give us our wildness and our woods,
Our huts and caves again!'

"The son of Mr. Palmer, Chaplain of Nusseerabad, while travelling lately with his father and mother in their way from Mhow, observed some Bheels looking earnestly at a large drove of laden bullocks which were drinking in a ford. He asked one of the Bheels if the bullocks belonged to him. 'No!' was the reply, 'but a good part of them would have been ours, if it were not for you English, who will let nobody thrive but yourselves *."

(These were precisely the envyings and lamentations of many among our own highlandmen, when their depredations were checked, and they could no longer carry on the "honourable" calling of their forefathers.)

On first approaching the Bheel villages, the Bishop observed a man run from the nearest hut to the top of a hill, and give a shrill shout or scream, which he heard repeated from the furthest hamlet in sight, and again from two others, which the Bishop could not see. "I asked the meaning of this," he continues, "and

* Narrative of a Journey, vol. ii. p. 468.

my guards informed me that these were their signals to give the alarm of our coming, our numbers, and that we had horse with us. By this means they knew at once whether it was advisable to attack us, to fly, or to remain quiet, while, if there were any of their number who had particular reasons for avoiding an interview with the troops and magistrates of the lowlands, they had thus fair warning given them to keep out of the way. This sounds like a description of Rob Roy's country, but these poor Bheels are far less formidable enemies than the old Mac Gregors."

This ancient people are very expert in the use of the bow, and have a curious way of shooting from the long grass, where they lie concealed, holding the bow with their feet. Besides, against their prey, quadruped, biped, and winged, the Bheels use the bow and arrow against fish which they kill in the rivers and pools with great certainty and rapidity. Their bows are of split bamboo, simple, but strong and elastic. The arrows are also of bamboo, with an iron head coarsely made, and a long single barb. Those intended for striking fish, have this head so contrived as to slip off from the shaft when the fish is struck, but to remain connected with it by a long line, on the principle of the harpoon. The shaft, in consequence, remains floating in the water, and not only contributes to weary out the animal, but shows its pursuer which way he flees, and thus enables him to seize it.

They have many curious customs, that date from very remote antiquity. One of them was witnessed by Bishop Heber, and described in his usual felicitous manner.

"A number of Bheels, men and women, came to our camp, (near Jhalloda,) with bamboos in their hands, and the women with their clothes so scanty, and tucked up so high, as to leave the whole limb nearly bare. They had a drum, a horn, and some

other rude minstrelsy, and said they were come to celebrate the *Hoolee* *. They drew up in two parties, one men, one women, and had a mock fight, in which at first the females had much the advantage, having very slender poles, while the men had only short cudgels, with which they had some difficulty in guarding their heads. At last some of the women began to strike a little too hard, on which their antagonists lost temper and closed with them so fiercely, that the poor females were put to the rout, in real or pretended terror. They collected a little money in the camp, and then went on to another village. The *Hoolee*, according to the orthodox system, was over, but these games are often prolonged for several days after its conclusion."

As Bishop Heber advanced in the country infested by the Bheels, he met caravans of Brinjarrees, or carriers of grain, (a singular wandering race †,) es-

* The *Hoolee* is the Hindoo carnival, during which the people of Central India more particularly indulge in all kinds of riot, drunkenness, and festivity. The same indecency of language is permitted as among the ancient and modern inhabitants of Italy at vintage time. This is also the season in India for pelting each other with a red powder. "During this carnival," says Sir John Malcolm, "which lasts four weeks, men forget both their restraints and distinctions; the poorest may cast the red powder upon his lord, the wife is freed from her habitual respect to her husband, and nothing but the song and the dance is heard. The festival extends to the lowest inhabitants equal, if not greater enjoyments than to the higher; and for the last eight days the labourer ceases from his toil, and the cultivator quits his field, deeming it impious to attend to any thing but the voice of joy and gladness." Vol. ii. p. 195.

† The Brinjarrees pass their whole lives in carrying grain from one part of the country to the other, seldom on their own account, but as agents for others. They travel in large bodies with their wives, children, dogs, and loaded bullocks. The men are all armed, as a protection against petty thieves. From the sovereigns and armies of Hindostan they have nothing to apprehend. Their calling is almost considered as sacred. Even contending armies allow

corted by Bheels, paid by the carriers for the purpose. They proceeded by day with an advanced and rear guard of these naked bowmen; and at night, for security against the robbers, the honest Brinjarrees drew their corn waggons into a circle, placing their cattle in the centre, and connecting each ox with his yoke-fellow, and at length to the wain, by iron collars riveted round their necks, and fastened to an iron chain, which last is locked to the cart-wheel. It is thus extremely difficult to plunder without awaking them; and in places of greater danger, one of the Brinjarrees always stands sentry. Still farther on, descending from the hills to the lowlands, the Bishop had himself one of these poor Bheels for a guide, who, as he trotted along the rugged road before his horse's head, with a shield and a neatly-made hatchet, and with a blanket of red baize flung over his shoulder, reminded him strongly of the pictures of a North American Indian. The dashing appearance of this man was owing to his being in the Company's pay, as a policeman; but the Bheels here were generally in much better plight, and less given to robbing than in the hilly country.

After this, a strong escort of Bheels was added to the Bishop's retinue. They not only led him safely through a perilous country, abounding with ravines, and broken land overgrown with brushwood, (the most favourable of places for the spring of a tiger, or the arrows of an ambushed band of robbers, where recently passengers had been plundered by Bheels, and a man carried off by a tiger from a numerous

them to pass and repass safely; never taking their goods without purchase, or even preventing them, if they choose, from victualling their enemy's camp: both sides wisely agreeing to respect and encourage a branch of industry, the interruption of which might be attended with fatal consequences to both. The punctuality of these corn-carriers is marvellous,

convoy of artillery, on its march to Kairah,) but they conducted him across the rapid stream of the Mhye, and, on his arrival at Wasnud, acted as watchmen to his camp, where their shrill calls from one to the other were heard all night.

“We were told,” says the Bishop, “not to be surprised at this choice, since these poor thieves are, when trusted, the trustiest of men, and, of all sentries, the most wakeful and indefatigable. They and the Kholees, a race almost equally wild, are uniformly preferred in Guzerat for the service of the police, and as durwans to gentlemen’s houses and gardens.”

When Sir John Malcolm began the work of reformation, the very first step he took was to raise a small corps of Bheels, commanded by their own chiefs, and “before,” says he, “these robbers had been in the service one month, I placed them as a guard over treasure, which had a surprising effect, both in elevating them in their own minds, and in those of other parts of the community.” Nor did the judicious reformer stop here; he took as his constant attendants some of the most desperate of the plundering chiefs; and the good effects fully answered the expectations which he had formed, by thus inspiring confidence, and exalting bold and courageous men in their own estimation.

We have only to add in honour of this ancient robber race, that the fair sex have great influence in the society, and that in the recent reform their women acted a prominent part, and one worthy of the feelings and character of their sex.

The very interesting work of Mr. Charles Coleman, (*The Mythology of the Hindoos, with Notices of various mountain and island Tribes, &c.*) recently published, affords the following additional anecdotes relative to the Bheels previous to their reformation.

“An English officer, a Captain B——d, had, by interrupting and wounding a Bheel, while labouring in his vocation (of robbery), been marked out for vengeance. In consequence of this he had a sentry to his house; but from the neighbouring bank of the river they had worked a subterraneous passage for a considerable distance, large enough for one man to crawl along, who had begun to perforate the floor of his bed-chamber when he was discovered. We had at the city where this took place nearly two thousand troops, yet it was necessary, for the officer's safety, to remove him to Bombay. A Parsee messman, who had refused to pay the usual tribute to the Bheels, was found dead in the morning in the mess-room. It was his custom to put his mat on a large wine-chest where he slept: in the morning he was found with his head placed on the mess-table, the headless body lying on the chest.”

An encampment of English, surrounded by two hundred sentries, was robbed by this people:—

“When the morning broke forth, every officer had been robbed, save one, and he had a priest (Bhaut) and a Bheel guard. Nor did the poor *siphauees* escape; for when they gave the alarm of ‘thief! thief!’ they were sure to get a blow or wound in the leg or thigh, from a Bheel lying on the ground, or moving about on all-fours, wrapped in a bullock's hide or a sheep-skin, or carrying a bush before or over him, so that the sentries were deceived; and if they fired, they were as likely to hit some of the women or children, or the followers, or the officers, as the Bheel himself; and had they fired, the Bheel, in the dark, thus placed in a populous camp, had every advantage, his weapon making no noise, and his companions being ready to shoot the *siphauee* through the head.

“Most of the officers were up during the night,

but their presence was useless. Lieutenant B—— did lay hands on a Bheel, but he literally slipped through his fingers, being naked, his body oiled all over, and his head shaved; and on giving the alarm, one or two arrows were seen to have gone through the cloths of the tent. Were it possible to retain a hold of a Bheel, your motions must be as quick as lightning; for they carry the blade of a knife, which is fastened round the neck by a string, and with which, if they find themselves in a dilemma, they will rip up the person holding them.

Captain Mundy, in his very spirited "Pen and Pencil Sketches in India," relates this personal adventure:—

"I retired to my tent this evening pretty well knocked up; and during the night had an adventure, which might have terminated with more loss to myself, had I slept sounder. My bed, a low charpoy, or 'four feet,' was in one corner of the tent, close to a door, and I woke several times from a feverish doze, fancying I heard something moving in my tent; but could not discover anything, though a cherang, or little Indian lamp, was burning on the table. I therefore again wooed the balmy power, and slept. At length, just as 'the iron tongue of midnight had told twelve,' (for I had looked at my watch five minutes before, and replaced it under my pillow,) I was awakened by a rustling sound under my head; and half opening my eyes, without changing my position, I saw a hideous black face within a foot of mine, and the owner of this index of a cut-throat, or, at least, cut-purse disposition, kneeling on the carpet, with one hand under my pillow, and the other grasping—not a dagger!—but the door-post. Still without moving my body, and with half-closed eyes, I gently stole my right hand to a boar-spear, which at night was always placed between my bed and the wall; and

as soon as I had clutched it, made a rapid and violent movement, in order to wrench it from its place, and try the virtue of its point upon the intruder's body, but I wrenched in vain. Fortunately for the robber, my bearer, in placing the weapon in its usual recess, had forced the point into the top of the tent and the butt into the ground so firmly, that I failed to extract it at the first effort; and my visiter, alarmed by the movement, started upon his feet and rushed through the door. I had time to see that he was perfectly naked, with the exception of a black blanket twisted round his loins, and that he had already stowed away in his cloth my candlesticks and my dressing-case, which latter contained letters, keys, money, and other valuables. I had also leisure, in that brief space, to judge, from the size of the arm extended to my bed, that the bearer was more formed for activity than strength; and by his grizzled beard, that he was rather old than young. I therefore sprang from my bed, and darting through the purdar of the inner door, seized him by the cummerbund just as he was passing the outer entrance*. The cloth, however, being loose, gave way, and ere I could confirm my grasp, he snatched it from my hand, tearing away my thumb-nail down to the quick. In his anxiety to escape, he stumbled through the outer purdar, and the much-esteemed dressing-case fell out of his loosened zone. I was so close at his heels, that he could not recover it; and jumping over the tent-ropes—which, doubtless, the rogue calculated would trip me up—he ran towards the road. I was in such a fury, that, forgetting my bare feet, I gave chase, vociferating lustily, 'Choor! choor!' (thief! thief!)

* The tents in India have double flies; the outer khanaut, or wall, forming a verandah, of some four feet wide, round the interior pavilion.

but was soon brought up by some sharp stones, just in time to see my rascal, by the faint light of the moon through the thick foliage overhead, jump upon a horse standing unheld near the road, and dash down the path at full speed, his black blanket flying in the wind. What would I have given for my double-barrelled Joe at that moment! As he and his steed went clattering along the rocky forest-road, I thought of the black huntsman of the Hartz, or the Erl-king! Returning to my tent, I solaced myself by abusing my servants, who were just rubbing their eyes and stirring themselves, and by threatening the terrified sepoy sentry with a court-martial. My trunks at night were always placed outside the tent, under the sentry's eye; the robber, therefore, must have made his entry on the opposite side, and he must have been an adept in his vocation, as four or five servants were sleeping between the khanauts. The poor devil did not get much booty for his trouble, having only secured a razor, a pot of pomatum, (which will serve to lubricate his person for his next exploit*,) and the candlesticks, which on closer inspection will prove to him the truth of the axiom, that 'all is not gold that glitters,' nor even silver. * * *. The next morning, on relating my adventure, I was told that I was fortunate in having escaped cold steel; and many comfortable instances were recited, of the robbed being stabbed in attempting to secure the robber †."

Of the other professed robbers and thieves in Central India, the two principal are the Baugries and Moghies, both Hindoos of the lowest caste: their redeeming qualities are bravery and expertness; they

* Indian thieves oil their naked bodies, to render their seizure difficult.

† Vol. i. p. 165

are "true to their salt," or to those who feed them, beyond most of the Hindoos; and so literally do they adopt the proverb, that they avoid tasting salt from the hands of any but their own brethren, that they may not be fettered in their darling pursuit of plunder. The Gwarriahs are a tribe who support themselves by stealing women and children, whom they sell as slaves; but this abominable practice has nearly been abolished wherever British influence extends. The Thugs are the last, and worst of all. They are bands of mendicants, self-called pilgrims, pilferers, robbers, and cowardly, treacherous murderers, chiefly Brahmins, but composed of all classes, even of Mahometans. They assume all sorts of disguises; sometimes seeking protection from travellers, at others offering it; in either case the fate of those who trust them is the same.

"The Thugs," says Sir John Malcolm*, "carry concealed a long silken cord with a noose, which they throw round the necks of their heedless companions, who are strangled and plundered. Their victims, who are always selected for having property, are, when numerous or at all on their guard, lulled by every art into confidence. They are invited to feasts, where their victuals and drink are mixed with soporific or poisonous drugs, through the effects of which they fall an easy prey to these murderers and robbers, the extraordinary success of whose atrocities can only be accounted for by the condition of the countries in which they take place."

The name of these monsters—Thug, *quasi* Tug, in English, would not be altogether inapplicable, as regards a principal part of their performance. "They watch their opportunity," says Bishop Heber, "to fling a rope with a slip-knot over the heads of their victims, and then they drag them from their horses

* Memoir of Central India, vol. ii., p. 189.

and strangle them : and so nimbly and with such fatal aim are they said to do this, that they seldom miss, and leave no time to the traveller to draw a sword, or use a gun, or in any way defend or disentangle himself. The wretches who practise this are very numerous in Guzerat and Malwa, but, when they occur in Hindostan, are generally from the south-eastern provinces.”

At an immeasurable distance from these nations of robbers—these hosts of hereditary banditti in India, and more like our casual, lawless associations in Europe, are the Decoits, who particularly infest the neighbourhood of Calcutta, robbing on the river in boats, or plundering on shore. Their gang-robbery is said very nearly to resemble that of the Ribandmen of Ireland, but unmixed with any political feeling. Five or ten peasants will meet together as soon as it is dark, to attack some neighbour's house, and not only plunder, but torture him, his wife, and children, with horrible cruelty, to make him discover his money. In the daytime these marauders follow peaceable professions, and some of them are thriving men, while the whole firm is often under the protection of a Zemindar *, who shares the booty, and does his best to bring off any of the gang who may fall into the hands of justice, by suborning witnesses to prove an *alibi*, bribing the inferior agents of police, or intimidating the witnesses for the prosecution. Thus many men suspected of these practices contrive to live on, from year to year, in tolerably good esteem with their neighbours, and completely beyond the reach of a government which requires proof ere it will punish. The evil is supposed to have increased since the number of spirit-shops has spread so rapidly in Calcutta. These fountains of mischief are thronged both by the Hindoo and Mussulman population,

* A Landholder, or Lord of the Manor,

especially at night ; and thus drunkenness on ardent spirits, and the fierce and hateful passions they engender, lead naturally to those results which night favours, at the same time that the drinking shops furnish convenient places of meeting for all men who may be banded for an-illicit purpose*.

AFGHAN ROBBERS.

THE mountain tribes of the Afghan race who dwell in Caubul, between India and Persia, are nearly all robbers ; but, like the Arabs, unite pillage with pastoral or other pursuits, and commit their depredations almost exclusively on the strangers that travel through their countries. Although I am not in possession of any striking stories of their actions, there are two or three of these tribes that may claim attention from their peculiarities.

There is, for example, that of the Jadrauns, a race of goat-herds, who wander continually with their goats through the thick pine forests that cover their mountains, and are in appearance and habits of life more like mountain bears than men. They are not numerous ; their wild country is never explored by travellers, and they are never by any chance met with out of their own hills. They are sometimes at war with their neighbours, and always on the look-out for travellers on the road from Caubul through Bungush, near the pass of Peiwaur, whom they invariably plunder.

More important than these bear-like robbers are the Vizeerees, a powerful tribe, occupying an extensive country among the mountains, which are also here covered by pine forests, but contain some few cleared

* Bishop Heber's Narrative.

and cultivated spots. Their habits are almost as retiring as those of their neighbours, the Jadrauns, and Mr. Elphinstone found it impossible to meet with a Vizeeree out of his own country. Those of the tribe who are fixed, live in small hamlets of thatched and terraced houses; in some places they live in caves cut out of the rocks. Some of these rise above each other in three stories, and others are so high as to admit a camel. But most of the tribe dwell in black tents, or moveable hovels of mats, or temporary straw huts; these go up to the high mountains in spring, and stay there till the cold and snow drive them back to the low and warm hills. Their principal stock is goats; but they also breed many small, but serviceable horses. They have no general government; but are divided into societies, some under powerful Khans, and others under a simple democracy; they are all most remarkable for their peaceful conduct among themselves; they have no wars between clans, and private dissension is hardly ever heard of; and yet they are all robbers!

Notorious plunderers, however, as they are, the smallest escort granted by them secures a traveller a hospitable reception through the whole tribe.

“ They are particularly remarkable for their attacks on the caravans, and migratory tribes to the west of the pass of Gholairee. No escorts are ever granted, or applied for there; the caravan is well guarded, and able to deter attacks or fight its way through. No quarter is given to men in these predatory wars; it is said that the Vizeerees would even kill a male child that fell into their hands; but they never molest women; and if one of their sex wander from a caravan, they treat her with kindness, and send guides to escort her to her tribe. Even a man would meet with the same treatment, if he could once make his way into the house of a Vizeeree; the master would then be

obliged to treat him with all the attention and good will which is due to a guest. Such is their veracity, that if there is a dispute about a stray goat, and one party will say it is his, and confirm his assertion by stroking his beard, the other instantly gives it up, without suspicion of fraud*.”

These mountain robbers have really exalted notions of what is due to the gentler sex. So kind to the stray wives or daughters of others, unlike savages or semi-barbarous men, who throw off from their own shoulders nearly all drudgery and labour save that of the chase, or the care of their flocks, these Vizeerees do not require any labour from their women. But not only this; a most extraordinary custom is said to prevail among them—a female prerogative that has no parallel among any other people upon earth, and that reverses what we are in the habit of considering the natural order of things—the women choose their husbands, and not the husbands their wives!

“If a woman is pleased with a man she sends the drummer of the camp to pin a handkerchief to his cap, with a pin which she has used to fasten her hair. The drummer watches his opportunity, and does this in public, naming the woman, and the man is immediately obliged to marry her, if he can pay her price to her father†.”

The Sheeraunees are a tribe more important still, great part of whose country is occupied by the lofty mountain of Tukhti Solimaun, and the hills which surround its base. Many parts of it are nearly inaccessible; one of the roads is in some places cut out of the steep face of the mountain, and in others supported by beams inserted in the rock, and with all this labour is still impracticable for beasts of burden.

* Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, by the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone, vol. ii. p. 97.

† Idem, p. 99.

The habits of a pastoral, wandering life, dispose to robbery; but unlike the other tribes, the Sheeraunees are essentially an agricultural people, keeping their valleys in a high state of cultivation, by means of damming the hill streams to irrigate them; and yet they are, perhaps, the greatest robbers of all these Afghans.

They are governed by a chief called the Neeka, or Grandfather, who is superstitiously revered by them, and left in possession of an extraordinary degree of power. He commands them in their predatory expeditions, and before the men march they all pass under his turban, which is stretched out for the purpose by the Neeka and a Moolah. This, they think, secures them from wounds and death.

They respect none of the neighbouring tribes that pass through their country, in their annual pastoral migrations; they attack them all: they may, indeed, be said to be at war with all the world, since they plunder every traveller that comes within their reach. They even attack the dead!

“While I was in their neighbourhood,” says Mr. Elphinstone, “they stopped the body of a Douranee of rank, which was going through their country to be buried at Candahar, and detained it till a ransom had been paid for it*.”

This is rather worse than a barbarous law that has lingered on even in England to our days, and allows the creditor to arrest the corpse of a debtor. These Sheeraunees, however, enjoy the reputation of unblemished good faith, and a traveller who trusts himself to them, or hires an escort from among them, may pass through their country in perfect security. Mr. Elphinstone says that these curious robbers are very punctual in their prayers, but do not appear to

* Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, &c.

feel much real devotion. In confirmation of this opinion, he adds the following amusing anecdote:—

“ I once saw a Sheeraunee performing his Namaz, while some people in the same company were talking of hunting ; the size of deer happened to be mentioned, and the Sheeraunee, in the midst of his prostrations, called out that the deer in his country were as large as little bullocks, and then went on with his devotions ! ”

THE BUCCANEERS OF AMERICA.

No class of robbers, always excepting the Pindarries of India, have been more conspicuous, or have operated on a grander scale, than the Buccaneers and Flibustiers of America. I remember, when a child, being horribly amused by a book that was popular at the time, as it probably still is with young people, which contained the lives of many of these notorious characters, with minute accounts of their cruelties and atrocities. The book is probably as fresh in the memory of most of my readers. It is not my intention to draw from it, or to give a ghastly interest to the present work, by quoting how the monster Morgan tortured his captives, or made them “ walk the plank,” or similar matters, but to give a brief sketch of these daring adventurers from Captian Burney’s voluminous, but interesting and authentic work *, which in itself contains a mine of geographical and various information, first collected by the Buccaneers. All the other histories of these men, and they are numerous, are, as Captain Burney remarks, “ boastful compositions which have delighted

* History of the Buccaneers of America, by James Burney, F.R.S., Captain in the Royal Navy. 1 vol. in 4to.

in exaggeration; and what is most mischievous, they have lavished commendations upon acts which demanded reprobation, and have endeavoured to raise miscreants, notorious for their want of humanity, to the rank of heroes, lessening thereby the stain upon robbery, and the abhorrence naturally conceived against cruelty."

Captain Burney thus describes the origin of these lawless associations, which for two centuries were allowed to carry on their depredations.

"The men whose enterprises are to be related were natives of different European nations, but chiefly of Great Britain and France, and most of them seafaring people, who being disappointed, by accidents or the enmity of the Spaniards, in their more sober pursuits in the West Indies, and also instigated by thirst for plunder, as much as by desire for vengeance, embodied themselves under different leaders of their own choosing, to make predatory war upon the Spaniards. These men the Spaniards naturally treated as pirates; but some peculiar circumstances which provoked their first enterprises, and a general feeling of enmity against that nation on account of her American conquests, procured them the connivance of the rest of the maritime States of Europe, and to be distinguished, first by the softened appellations of freebooters and adventurers, and afterwards by that of Buccaneers."

Spain, indeed, considered the New World as treasure-trove of which she was lawfully and exclusively the mistress. The well-known bull of Pope Alexander VI. gave what was then held as a sacred recognition of these exclusive rights. Unaccountable as such folly may now appear, it is an historical fact that the Spaniards at first fancied they could keep their discovery of the West India Islands and of the American continent a secret from the rest

of the world, and prevent the ships of other nations from finding their way thither. When, in the year 1517, about twenty-five years after their first settlements, the Spaniards found a large English ship between St. Domingo and Porto Rico, they were overcome with rage and astonishment; and when this same ship came to the mouth of the port of St. Domingo, and the captain sent on shore to request permission to sell his goods, Francisco di Tapia, the Governor of the Spanish fort, ordered the cannons to be fired at her, on which the English were obliged to weigh anchor and sheer off. The news of this unexpected visit, when known in Spain, caused great inquietude, and the Governor of the castle of St. Domingo was reprimanded, "because he had not, instead of forcing the English ship to depart by firing his cannon, contrived to seize her, so that no one might have returned to teach others of her nation the route to the Spanish Indies."

It is really amusing to reflect on this jealousy and these pretensions, now that nearly every one of those islands is under our sway; that every corner of those seas has long been frequented by English enterprise; that our colonies occupy so vast an extent of the western continent; that a people descended from us, and speaking our language, have established the most formidable government of America; and that Spain, despoiled and humbled, is scarcely the mistress of a rood of land in those vast regions from which she would have excluded all the rest of the world.

In the plenitude of her power and pretensions, however, neither the French nor the English, though when taken they were barbarously treated as pirates, were to be deterred. According to Hakluyt, one Thomas Tyson was sent to the West Indies in 1526, as factor to some English merchants, and many adventurers soon followed him. The French, who had

made several voyages to the Brazils, also increased in numbers in the West Indies. All these went with the certainty that they should meet with hostility from the Spaniards, which they resolved to return with hostility. That they did not always wait for an attack appears by an ingenious phrase of the French adventurers, who, if the first opportunity was in their favour, termed their profiting by it "*se dédommager par avance.*" To repress these interlopers, the jealous Spaniards employed armed ships, or *guarda-costas*, the commanders of which were instructed to take no prisoners! On the other hand, the intruders joined their numbers, made combinations, and descended on different parts of the coast, ravaging the Spanish towns and settlements. A warfare was thus established between Europeans in the West Indies entirely independent of transactions in Europe. All Europeans not Spaniards, whether there was war or peace between their respective nations in the Old World, on their meeting in the New, regarded each other as friends and allies, with the Spaniards for their common enemy, and called themselves "Brethren of the Coast."

Their principal pursuit was not of a nature to humanize these desperate adventurers, for it was hunting of cattle, the hides and suet of which they could turn to profitable account. "The time when they began to form factories," says Captain Burney, "to hunt cattle for the skins, and to cure the flesh as an article of traffic, is not certain, but it may be concluded that these occupations were begun by the crews of wrecked vessels, or by seamen who had disagreed with their commander; and that the ease, plenty, and freedom from all command and subordination enjoyed in such a life, soon drew others to quit their ships, and join in the same occupations. The ships that touched on the coast supplied the

hunters with European commodities, for which they received, in return, hides, tallow, and cured meat."

When the Spanish Court complained to the different Governments of Europe, of which these men were the natural subjects, it was answered: "That the people complained against acted entirely on their own authority and responsibility, not as the subjects of any Prince, and that the King of Spain was at liberty to proceed against them according to his own pleasure." But our lion-hearted Queen Bess retorted more boldly, "That the Spaniards had drawn these inconveniences upon themselves, by their severe and unjust dealings in their American commerce; for she did not understand why either her subjects, or those of any other European Prince, should be debarred from traffic in the West Indies. That as she did not acknowledge the Spaniards to have any title by the donation of the Bishop of Rome, so she knew no right they had to any places others than those they were in actual possession of; for that their having touched only here and there upon a coast, and given names to a few rivers or capes, were such insignificant things as could no ways entitle them to a propriety further than in the parts where they actually settled and continued to inhabit*."

"The Brethren of the Coast" were first known by the general term of *Flibustier*, which is supposed to be nothing but the French sailors' corruption of our word "freebooter." The derivation of the term *Buccaneer*, by which they were afterwards designated, is curious.

"The flesh of the cattle killed by the hunters was cured to keep good for use, after a manner learned from the Caribbe Indians, which was as follows: the meat was laid to be dried upon a wooden grate or

* Camden's Elizabeth, A.D. 1680.

hurdle, which the Indians called *barbecu*, placed at a good distance over a slow fire. The meat when cured was called *boucan*, and the same name was given to the place of their cookery." From *boucan*, they made the verb *boucaner*, which the *Dictionnaire de Trevoux* explains to be "to dry red, without salt," and then the noun *Boucanier*; *quasi* Buccaneer.

This curious association, that united the calling of hunters and cruisers, was held together by a very simple code of laws and regulations. It is said that every member of it had his chosen and declared comrade, between whom property was in common while they lived together, and when one of the two died, the other succeeded to whatever he possessed. This, however, was not a compulsory regulation, for the Buccaneers were known at times to bequeath by will to their relatives or friends in Europe. There was a general right of participation insisted upon in certain things, among which was meat for present consumption, and other necessaries of life. It has even been said that bolts, locks, and every kind of fastening were prohibited, as implying a doubt of "the honour of their vocation." Many men of respectable lineage became Buccaneers, on which it was customary for them to drop their family name, and to assume a *nom de guerre*. "Some curious anecdotes," says Captain Burney, "are produced, to show the great respect some of them entertained for religion and morality. A certain Flibustier Captain, named Daniel, shot one of his crew in the church, for behaving irreverently during the performance of mass. Raveneau de Lussan took the occupation of a Buccaneer because he was in debt, and wished, as every honest man should do, to have wherewithal to satisfy his creditors."

In the year 1625 the English and French together took possession of the island of St. Christopher, and

five years later of the small island of Tortuga, near the north-west end of Hispaniola, which continued to be for some years the head-quarters of the Buccaneers, who, whenever the countries of which they were natives were at war with Spain, obtained commissions from Europe, and acted as regular privateers in the West Indies, and on the Spanish main.

In 1638, the Spaniards in great force surprised the island of Tortuga, while most of the adventurers were absent in Hispaniola engaged in the chase of cattle, and barbarously massacred all who fell into their hands. The Spaniards did not garrison the island. Soon after their departure, the Buccaneers, to the number of three hundred, again took possession of Tortuga, and then for the first time elected a chief or commander.

As the hostility of the Buccaneers was solely directed against the Spaniards, all other Europeans in those latitudes regarded them as champions in the common cause; and the severities which had been exercised against them increased the sympathy for them in the breasts of others, and inflamed their own hearts with the thirst of revenge. Their numbers were speedily recruited by English, French, and Dutch from all parts, and both the pursuits of hunting and cruising were followed with redoubled vigour. At this time the French in particular seemed to pride themselves in the Buccaneers, whom their writers styled "*nos braves.*" The English contented themselves with speaking of their "unparalleled exploits."

About the middle of the seventeenth century the French addicted themselves almost exclusively to hunting. Hispaniola was their great resort, and, as the Spaniards found they could not expel them from that island, they themselves destroyed the cattle and wild hogs, in order to render the business of hunting unproductive. This drove the French to other branches

of industry, equally opposed to the inclinations of the Spaniards; for, finding the chase no longer profitable, they began to cultivate the soil and to cruise more than ever.

The extermination practised upon them by the Spaniards, whenever they fell into their hands, seems to have been admitted as a standing and praiseworthy law among the latter people, while it naturally produced an equally sanguinary retaliation on the part of the adventurers. The cruelties of the Spaniards were much circulated in Europe in the form of popular stories, and produced a great effect. A Frenchman, a native of Languedoc, of the name of Montbars, on reading one of these stories, conceived such an implacable hatred against the Spaniards, that he went to the West Indies, joined the Buccaneers, and pursued his vengeance with so much ardour and success, that he obtained the title of "The Exterminator."

Pierre, a native of Dieppe, whose name was graced with the adjunct of "Le Grand," was another famous French Buccaneer. In a boat with only twenty-eight men, he surprised and took the ship of the Vice-Admiral of the Spanish galleons, as she was sailing homeward with a rich freight. He did not, however, disgrace his exploit by massacre, for he set the Spanish crew on shore at Cape Tiburon, and carried his prize safely to France.

A native of Portugal, styled Bartolomeo Portuguez, also rendered himself famous about this time for his numerous and wonderful escapes in battle and from the gallows.

"But," continues Captain Burney, "no one of the Buccaneers hitherto named arrived at so great a degree of notoriety as a Frenchman called François L'Olonnais. This man, and Michael le Basque, at the head of 650 men, took the towns of Maracaibo

and Gibraltar, in the gulf of Venezuela. The booty they obtained by the plunder and ransom of these places was estimated at 400,000 crowns. The barbarities practised on the prisoners could not be exceeded. L'Olonnais was possessed with an ambition to make himself renowned for being terrible. At one time, it is said, he put the whole crew of a Spanish ship, ninety men, to death, performing himself the office of executioner, by beheading them. He caused the crews of four other vessels to be thrown into the sea; and more than once, in his frenzies, he tore out the hearts of his victims, and devoured them! Yet this man had his encomiasts! so much will loose notions concerning glory, aided by a little partiality, mislead even sensible men. Père Charlevoix (a French Priest) says, '*Celui de tous, dont les actions illustrèrent d'avantage les premières années du gouvernement de M. d'Orgeron, fut l'Olonnais. Ses premiers succès furent suivis de quelques malheurs, qui ne servirent qu'à donner un nouveau lustre à sa gloire.*' The career of this savage was terminated by the Indians of the coast of Darien, on which he had landed."

The Buccaneers now became so formidable, that several Spanish towns submitted to pay them regular contributions. They were commanded at this time by one Mansvelt, whose country is unknown, but who was followed with equal alacrity by both French and English, and who seems to have been more provident and more ambitious than any chief who had preceded him. He formed a plan for founding an independent Buccaneer establishment, and at the head of five hundred men took the island of Santa Katalina for that purpose from the Spaniards, and garrisoned it with one hundred Buccaneers, and all the slaves he had taken. A Welshman, called Henry Morgan, was the second in command on this expedition. Mansvelt

died of illness shortly after, when the garrison he had left was obliged to surrender to the Spaniards.

On the death of Mansvelt, Morgan became the chief, and the most fortunate leader of the Buccaneers. A body of several hundred men placed themselves under his command, with whom he took and plundered the town of Puerto del Principe in Cuba. At this place a Frenchman was foully slain by an Englishman. All the French took to arms, but Morgan pacified them by putting the murderer in irons, and afterwards hanging him at Jamaica. Morgan, however, whom the old English author of "the Buccaneers of America" styles Sir Henry Morgan, did not respect the old proverb, of honour among thieves; in consequence of which most of the French separated from him. Yet he was strong enough shortly after to attack Porto Bello, one of the best fortified places belonging to the Spaniards. His bravery and his wonderful address are overshadowed by the shocking cruelties he committed in this expedition. In the attack of a fort, he compelled a number of priests, monks, and nuns, his prisoners, to carry and plant the scaling ladders against the walls; and many of these poor creatures were killed by their countrymen who defended the fort. A castle that had made a bold resistance, on surrendering, was set on fire, and burned to the ground with the garrison within it. Many prisoners died under the tortures that Morgan inflicted on them, to make them discover concealed treasures, which frequently had no existence, save in the cupidity of his imagination.

In the brilliancy of this success, the French forgot Morgan's peccadilloes in money matters, and joined him again in great numbers. There was one large French Buccaneer ship, the commander and crew of which refused to act with him. The crafty Welshman dissembled his rage, and pressingly invited the

French captain and his officers to dine on board his own ship. These guests he made his prisoners, and in their absence easily took their ship. The men he put in charge of this prize got drunk on the occasion, and the ship was suddenly blown up; whether from the drunkenness and carelessness of the English, or the direful revenge of some Frenchman, remains matter of doubt. The number of the French prisoners is not mentioned, but it is said that three hundred and fifty Englishmen perished with this ship, which was the largest of the fleet.

Morgan's next operation was an attack on Maracaibo and Gibraltar, which unfortunate towns were again sacked. These merciless desperadoes were accustomed to shut up their prisoners in churches, where it was easy to keep guard over them. At Maracaibo and Gibraltar, in this instance, so little care was taken of them, that many of these unfortunate captives were actually starved to death in the churches, whilst the Buccaneers were revelling in their dwellings.

Morgan was near being destroyed on his return from these places, for the Spaniards had had time to put in order a castle at the entrance of the Lagune of Maracaibo, and three large men-of-war had arrived, and stationed themselves by the castle to cut off the pirate's retreat.

But the Welshman fitted up one of his vessels as a fire-ship, in which were stuck logs of wood, dressed with hats on to look like men, and which in every thing was made to bear the appearance of a common fighting-ship. Following close in the rear of this mute crew, he saw two of the Spanish men-of-war blown up, and he took the third. He then passed the castle without loss, by means of a stratagem, by which he threw the stupid garrison off their guard. The value of the booty obtained was 250,000 pieces of eight.

The year after this expedition, (in July, 1670,) a solemn treaty of peace, known in diplomacy under the name of the "Treaty of America," and made in the view of terminating the Buccaneer warfare, and settling all disputes between the subjects of the two countries in the Western hemisphere, was concluded between Great Britain and Spain. But the Buccaneers cared nothing for treaties, and would not be pacified. On the contrary, as soon as the news of the peace reached them, they resolved, as of one accord, to undertake some grand expedition, of which the skilful Morgan should have the command. In the beginning of December, 1670, thirty-seven vessels, having on board altogether more than two thousand men, joined the Welshman at Cape Tiburon, the place of general rendezvous he had himself appointed. Lots were then cast as to which of the three places, Carthagena, Vera Cruz, and Panama, should be attacked. The lot fell upon Panama, which was believed to be the richest of the three.

Preparatory to this arduous undertaking, Morgan employed men to hunt cattle and cure meat, and sent vessels to procure maize, at the settlements on the main. For the distribution of the plunder they were to obtain, specific articles of agreement were drawn up and subscribed to. Morgan, as commander-in-chief, was to receive one hundredth part of the whole; each captain was to have eight shares; those who should be maimed and wounded were provided for, and additional rewards promised for those who should particularly distinguish themselves by their bravery and conduct. On the 16th of December the fleet set sail, and on the 20th they retook the island of Santa Katalina, which Morgan, who had embraced the notion of Mansvelt to erect himself into the head of a free state, independent of any European nation, resolved should be the centre of his establishment and

power. The Buccaneers next took the castle of San Lorenzo, at the entrance of the river Chagre, on the West-India side of the American isthmus, losing one hundred men in killed, and having seventy wounded. Of three hundred and fourteen Spaniards who composed the garrison, more than two hundred were put to death.

Morgan had now a *pied-à-terre*, and a good place of retreat on one side of the wild and perilous isthmus; he accordingly set his prisoners to work to repair and strengthen the castle of San Lorenzo, where he left five hundred men as a garrison, besides one hundred and fifty men to take care of the ships which were left in the Atlantic, while he should go to the shores of the Pacific. It was on the 18th of January, 1671, that he set forward at the head of twelve hundred men for Panama. The length of the march from ocean to ocean was not long, but rendered tremendous by the nature of the intervening country and the wildness of its Indian inhabitants. One party of this pirate army, with artillery and stores, embarked in canoes, to ascend the river Chagre, the course of which is very serpentine. At the end of the second day they were obliged to quit their canoes, for a vast number of fallen trees obstructed them, and the river was found in many places almost dry; but the way by land offered so many difficulties to the carriage of their stores, that they again resorted to their canoes where they could—making very little way. On the sixth day, when they had nearly exhausted their travelling store of provision, and death by hunger in that horrid wilderness stared them in the face, they had the good fortune to discover a barn full of maize. The native Indians fled at their approach, and could never be caught. On the seventh day they reached a village called Cruz, which was set on fire and aban-

done by its inhabitants, who fled as the Buccaneers approached. They, however, found there a sack of bread and fifteen jars of Peruvian wine. They were still eight leagues distant from Panama. On the ninth day of the journey they saw the expanse of the South sea before them, and around them some fields with cattle grazing. As evening approached, they came in sight of the church towers of Panama, when they halted and waited impatiently for the morrow. They had lost in their march thus far, by being fired at from concealed places, ten men; and had ten more wounded.

The city of Panama is said to have consisted at that time of seven thousand houses, many of which were edifices of considerable magnificence, and built with cedar: but no regular fortifications defended the wealth and magnificence of the place. Some works had been raised, but in most parts the city lay open, and was to be won and defended by plain fighting. The Buccaneers asserted that the Spaniards had a force amounting to two thousand infantry and four hundred horse; but it is supposed that this was in part made up of inhabitants and slaves.

When the Buccaneers resumed their march at an early hour next morning, the Spaniards came out to meet them, preceded by herds of wild bulls, which they drove upon the adventurers to disorder their ranks. But the Buccaneers, as hunters of these wild animals, were too well acquainted with their habits to be discomposed by them; and this attack of the van does not seem to have had much effect. The Spaniards, however, must have made an obstinate resistance, for it was night before they gave way and the Buccaneers became masters of the city. During the long battle, and, indeed, all that day and night, the Buccaneers gave no quarter. Six hundred

Spaniards fell. The loss of the Buccaneers is not specified, but it appears to have been very considerable.

When master of the city, Morgan was afraid that his men might get drunk, and besurprised and cut off by the Spaniards: to prevent this, he caused it to be reported that all the wine in the city had been expressly poisoned by the inhabitants. The dread of poison kept the fellows sober. But Morgan had scarcely taken up his quarters in Panama when several parts of the city burst out into flames, which, fed by the cedar-wood and other combustible materials of which the houses were chiefly built, spread so rapidly, that in a short time a great part of the city was burnt to the ground. It has been disputed whether this was done by design or accident—by the Buccaneers or the despairing Spaniards; but it appears that Morgan, who always charged it upon the Spaniards, gave all the assistance he could to such of the inhabitants as endeavoured to stop the progress of the fire, which, however, was not quite extinguished for weeks. Among the buildings destroyed was a factory-house belonging to the Genoese, who then carried on the trade of supplying the Spaniards with slaves from Africa*.

The licentiousness, rapacity, and cruelty of the Buccaneers had no bounds. "They spared," says Exquemelin, a Dutchman and one of the party, "in these their cruelties, no sex nor condition whatsoever. As to religious persons (monks and nuns, he means) and priests, they granted them less quarter than others, unless they procured a considerable sum of money for their ransom." Detachments scoured the country to plunder and to bring in prisoners. Many of the unfortunate inhabitants escaped with their

* Captain Burney.

effects by sea, and reached the islands that are thickly clustered in the bay of Panama. But Morgan found a large boat lying aground in the port, which he launched and manned with a numerous crew, and sent her to cruise among those islands. A galleon, on board which the nuns of a convent had taken refuge, and where much money, plate, and other effects of value had been lodged, had a very narrow escape from these desperadoes. They took several vessels in the bay. One of them was large, and admirably adapted for cruising. This opened a new prospect, that was brilliant and enticing; an unexplored ocean studded with islands was before them, and some of the Buccaneers began to consult how they might leave their chief, Morgan, and try their fortunes on the South Sea, whence they proposed to sail, with the plunder they should obtain, by the East Indies to Europe. This diminution of force would have been fatal to Morgan, who, therefore, as soon as he got a hint of the design, cut away the masts of the ship, and burned every boat and vessel lying at Panama that could suit their purpose.

At length, on the 24th of February 1671, about four weeks after the taking of Panama, Morgan and his men departed from the still smouldering ruins of that unfortunate city, taking with them one hundred and seventy-five mules loaded with spoil, and six hundred prisoners, part of whom were detained to carry burdens across the isthmus, and others for the ransom expected for their release. Among the latter were many women and children, who were made to suffer cruel fatigue, hunger, and thirst, and artfully made to apprehend being carried to Jamaica and sold as slaves, that they might the more earnestly endeavour to procure money for their ransom. When these poor creatures threw themselves on their knees, and, weeping and tearing their hair, begged of Mor-

gan to let them return to their families, his brutal answer was, that "he came not there to listen to cries and lamentations, but to seek money." This idol of his soul, indeed, he sought from his comrades as well as his captives, and in such a manner that it is astonishing they did not blow his brains out. In the middle of his march back to the fort of San Lorenzo, he drew up his men, and caused every one of them to take a solemn oath, that he had not reserved for himself or concealed any plunder, but had delivered all fairly into the common stock. (This ceremony, it appears, was not uncommon among the Buccaneers.) "But," says Exquemelin, "Captain Morgan having had experience that those loose fellows would not much stickle to swear falsely in such a case, he commanded every one to be searched; and that it might not be taken as an affront, he permitted himself to be first searched, even to the very soles of his shoes. The French Buccaneers who had engaged in this expedition with Morgan were not well satisfied with this new custom of searching; but their number being less than that of the English, they were forced to submit."

As soon as the marauders arrived at San Lorenzo, a division was made of the booty, according to the proportions agreed upon before sailing from Hispaniola. But the narrative says, "Every person received his portion, or rather what part thereof Captain Morgan was pleased to give him. For so it was, that his companions, even those of his own nation, complained of his proceedings; for they judged it impossible that, of so many valuable robberies, no greater share should belong to them than 200 pieces of eight per head. But Captain Morgan was deaf to these, and to many other complaints of the same kind."

Morgan, however, having well filled his own purse,

determined to withdraw quietly from the command : “ which he did,” says the narrative of the Buccaneer, “ without calling any council, or bidding any one adieu ; but went secretly on board his own ship, and put out to sea without giving notice, being followed only by three or four vessels of the whole fleet, who it is believed went shares with him in the greatest part of the spoil.”

The rest of the Buccaneer vessels left before the castle of San Lorenzo, at Chagre, soon separated. Morgan sailed straight to Jamaica, where he had begun to make fresh levies of men to accompany him to the island of St. Katalina, which he purposed to hold as his own independent state, and to make it a common place of refuge for pirates ; but the arrival of a new Governor at Jamaica, Lord John Vaughan, with strict orders to enforce the late treaty with Spain, obliged him to abandon his plan.

The Buccaneers, however, were not put down by this new Governor of Jamaica, but under different leaders continued their depredations for more than twenty years longer.

Lord John Vaughan proclaimed a pardon for all piratical offences committed to that time, and promised a grant of thirty-five acres of land to every Buccaneer who should claim the benefit of the proclamation and engaged to apply himself to planting. I am startled almost into incredulity by what follows.

“ The author of the History of Jamaica says, ‘ This offer was intended as a lure to engage the Buccaneers to come into port with their effects, that the Governor might, and which he was directed to do, take from them the tenths and the fifteenths of their booty as the dues of the crown, and of the Colonial Government for granting them commissions.’ Those who had neglected to obtain commissions would of course have to make their peace by an in-

creased composition. In consequence of this scandalous procedure, the Jamaica Buccaneers, to avoid being so taxed, kept aloof from Jamaica, and were provoked to continue their old occupations. Most of them joined the French Flibustiers at Tortuga. Some were afterwards apprehended at Jamaica, where they were brought to trial, condemned as pirates, and executed*."

A war entered into by the English and French against the Dutch, gave, for a time, employment to the Buccaneers and Flibustiers, and a short respite to the Spaniards, who, however, exercised their wonted barbarous revenge on their old enemies, whenever and in whatsoever manner they fell into their hands.

In 1673, for example, they murdered in cold blood three hundred French Flibustiers, who had been shipwrecked on their coast at Porto Rico, sparing only seventeen of their officers. These officers were put on board a vessel bound for the continent, with the intention of transporting them to Peru; but an English Buccaneer cruiser met the ship at sea, liberated the Frenchmen, and, in all probability, cut the throats of the Spaniards.

Ever since the plundering of Panama by Morgan, the imagination of the Buccaneers had been heated by the prospect of expeditions to the South Sea. This became known to the Spaniards, and gave rise to numerous forebodings and prophecies, both in Spain and in Peru, of great invasions by sea and by land.

In 1673 an Englishman of the name of Thomas Peche, who had formerly been a Buccaneer in the West Indies, fitted out a ship in England for a piratical voyage to the South Sea against the Spaniards; and two years after, La Sound, a Frenchman, with a

* Captain Burney's History of the Buccaneers of America, p. 72.

small body of daring adventurers, attempted to cross the isthmus, as Morgan had done (though not by the same route), but he could not get further than the town of Cheapo, where he was driven back. These events greatly increased the alarm of the Spaniards, who, according to Dampier, prophesied with confidence "that the English privateers in the West Indies would that year (1675) open a door into the South Seas."

But it was not till five years after, or in 1680, when, having contracted friendship with the Darien Indians, and particularly with a small tribe called the Mosquitos, the English adventurers again found their way across the isthmus to those alarmed shores. Some of these Mosquito Indians, who seem to have been a noble race of savages deserving of better companions than the Buccaneers, went with this party, being animated by a deadly hatred of the Spaniards, and an extraordinary attachment to the English.

The Buccaneers who engaged in this expedition were the crews of seven vessels, amounting altogether to three hundred and sixty-six men, of whom thirty-seven were left to guard the ships during the absence of those who went on the expedition, which was not expected to be of long continuance. There were several men of some literary talent among the marauders, who have written accounts of the proceedings, which have the most romantic interest. These were Basil Ringrose, Barty Sharp, William Dampier, who, though a common seaman, was endowed with great observation and a talent for description, and Lionel Wafer, a surgeon providently engaged by the Buccaneers, whose "Description of the Isthmus of Darien" is one of the most instructive, and decidedly the most amusing book of travels we have in our language.

It was on the 16th of April that the expedition passed over from Golden Island, and landed in Darien, each man provided with four cakes of bread called dough-boys, with a fusil, a pistol, and a hanger. They began their arduous march marshalled in divisions, each with its commander and distinguishing flag. Many Darien Indians came to supply them with provisions, and to keep them company as confederates; among these were two chiefs, who went by the names of Captain Andreas and Captain Antonio.

The very first day's journey discouraged four of the Buccaneers, who returned to their ships. The object of the expedition was to reach and plunder the town of Santa Maria, near the gulf of San Miguel, on the South Sea side of the isthmus; and on the afternoon of the second day they came to a river, which Captain Andreas, the Indian chief, told them, crossed the isthmus and ran by Santa Maria. On the third day they came to a house belonging to a son of Captain Andreas, who wore a wreath of gold about his head, which made the Buccaneers call him "King Golden Cap."

Wherever there were Indian habitations, they were most kindly and hospitably received. On the evening of the fourth day they gained a point whence the river of Santa Maria was navigable, and where canoes were prepared for them. The next morning, as they were about to depart, the harmony of the party was disturbed by the quarrel of two of the Buccaneer commanders. John Coxon fired his musket at Peter Harris, which Harris was going to return, when the others interfered and effected a reconciliation. Here seventy of the Buccaneers embarked in fourteen canoes, in each of which there went two Indians to manage them, and guide them down the stream. This mode of travelling, owing to the scarcity of water and other impediments, was as wearisome as

marching. After enduring tremendous fatigue, the land and water party met on the eighth day of the journey at a beachy point of land, where the river, being joined by another stream, became broad and deep. This had often been a rendezvous of the Darien Indians, when they collected for attack or defence against the Spaniards; and here the whole party now made a halt, to rest themselves, and to clean and prepare their arms.

On the ninth day, Buccaneers and Indians, in all nearly six hundred men, embarked in sixty-eight canoes, got together by the Indians, and glided pleasantly down the river. At midnight they landed within half a mile of the town of Santa Maria. The next morning, at day-break, they heard the Spanish garrison firing muskets and beating the *réveillée*. It was seven in the morning when they came to the open ground before the fort, when the Spaniards commenced firing upon them. This fort was nothing but a stockade, which the Buccaneers took without the loss of a single man—an immunity which did not teach them mercy, for they killed twenty-six Spaniards, and wounded sixteen.

The Indians, however, were still less merciful. After the Spaniards had surrendered, they took many of them into the adjoining woods, where they killed them with their spears, and if the Buccaneers had not prevented them, they would not have left a single Spaniard alive. The long and bloody grievances these savages had scored against their conquerors was aggravated here by the circumstance that one of their chiefs, or, as the Buccaneers call him, the King of Darien, found in the fort his eldest daughter, who had been forced from her father's habitation by one of the Spanish garrison, and was with child by him.

The Spaniards had by some means been warned of the intended visit to Santa Maria, and had secreted

or sent away almost every thing that was of value.—“ Though we examined our prisoners severely,” says a Buccaneer, “ the whole that we could pillage, both in the town and fort, amounted only to twenty pounds’ weight of gold, and a small quantity of silver ; whereas three days sooner we should have found three hundred pounds’ weight in gold in the fort.” It ought to be mentioned, that the Spaniards were in the habit of collecting considerable quantities of gold from the mountains in the neighbourhood of Santa Maria.

This disappointment was felt very severely, and whether it was previously decided, or now entered their heads to seek compensation for this disappointment, the majority of the Buccaneers resolved to proceed to the South Sea. The boldness of this resolution will be felt by reflecting, that they had only canoes to go in, and that they might meet at their very outset a lofty Spanish galleon or ship of war, that might sink half of their frail boats at a broadside. Some of them, indeed, were deterred by this prospect. John Coxon, the commander, who had fired his musket at Peter Harris, and who seems to have been a contemptible bully, was for returning across the isthmus to their ships, and so were his followers. To win him over, those who were for the South Sea, though they had a mean opinion of his capability, offered him the post of General, or Commander-in-chief, which Coxon accepted, and as it was on the condition that he and his men should join in the scheme, all the Buccaneers went together. The Darien chief Andreas, with his son Golden Cap, and some followers, also continued with the rovers, but the greater part of the Darien Indians left them at Santa Maria, and returned to their homes.

On the 17th of April the expedition embarked, and fell down the river to the gulf of San Miguel, which

they did not reach until the following morning, owing to a flood tide.

They were now fairly in the South Sea! The prophecy of the Spaniards was accomplished, and the Buccaneers looked across that magnificent expanse of waters with sanguine hope.

On the 19th of April they entered the vast bay of Panama, and fortunately captured, at one of the islands, a Spanish vessel of thirty tons, on board of which one hundred and thirty of the Buccaneers immediately threw themselves, overjoyed to be relieved from the cramped and crowded state they had endured in the canoes—though of a certainty, even now, so many men on board so small a vessel could leave small room for comfort.

The next day they took another small bark. On the 22nd they rendezvoused at the island of Chepillo, near the mouth of the river Cheapo; and in the afternoon began to row along shore from that island towards the city of Panama. The Spaniards there had obtained intelligence of the Buccaneers being in the bay, and prepared to meet them. Eight vessels were lying in the road; three of these they hastily equipped, manning them with the crews of all the vessels, and with men from shore; the whole, however, according to the Buccaneer accounts, not exceeding two hundred and thirty men; and of these one-third only were Europeans—the rest Mulattoes and Negroes. The disparity therefore was in the nature of the vessels.—“We had sent away the Spanish barks we had taken,” says one of the Buccaneers, “to seek fresh water, so that we had only canoes for the fight, and in them not two hundred men.”

As this fleet of canoes came in sight at daybreak on the 23rd, the three armed Spanish ships got under





The Buccaneers of Panama.

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sail, and stood towards them. The conflict was severe, and lasted the greater part of the day. The Spanish ships fought with great bravery, but their crews were motley and unskilful, whilst the Buccaneers were expert seamen, and well trained to the use of their arms. Richard Sawkins was the hero of the day: after three repulses, he succeeded in boarding and capturing one of the Spanish ships, which decided the victory. Another ship was carried by boarding soon after, and the third saved herself by flight. The Spanish commander fell with many of his people. The Buccaneers had eighteen killed, and above thirty wounded. Peter Harris, the captain, who had been fired at by Coxon, was among the wounded, and died two days after. As for John Coxon, who was nominally General, he showed great backwardness in the engagement, which lost him the confidence of the rovers. The Darien chiefs were in the heat of the battle, and behaved bravely.

The Buccaneers, not thinking themselves strong enough to land and attack Panama, contented themselves with capturing the vessels that were at anchor in the road before the city. One of these was a ship named the *Trinidad*, of 400 tons burden, a fast sailer and in good condition. She had on board a cargo principally consisting of wine, sugar, and sweetmeats; and, moreover, a considerable sum of money was found. In the other prizes they found flour and ammunition. Two of these, with the *Trinidad*, they fitted out for cruising.

Thus, in less than a week after their arrival on the coast of the South Sea, they were in possession of a fleet not ill equipped, with which they formed a close blockade of Panama for the present, and for the future might scour that ocean.

Two or three days after the battle with the Spaniards, discord broke out among the Buccaneers.

The taunts and reflections that fell upon the General, Coxon, and some of his followers, determined him and seventy men to return, by the way they had come, across the isthmus to the Atlantic. The Darien chiefs, Andreas and Antonio, also departed for their homes, but Andreas, to prove his good-will to the Buccaneers, who remained in the South Sea, left a son and one of his nephews with them.

Richard Sawkins, who had behaved so well in the battle, was now unanimously chosen General, or chief commander. After staying ten days before Panama, they retired to the island of Taboga, in the neighbourhood. Here they stopped nearly a fortnight in expectation of the arrival of a rich ship from Lima. This ship came not, but several other vessels fell into their hands, by which they obtained nearly sixty thousand dollars in specie, 1,200 sacks of flour, 2,000 jars of wine, a quantity of brandy, sugar, sweetmeats, poultry, and other provisions, some gunpowder, shot, &c. Among their prisoners was a number of unfortunate negro slaves, which tempted the Spanish merchants of Panama to go to the Buccaneers, and to buy as many of the slaves as they were inclined to sell. These merchants paid two hundred pieces of eight for every negro, and they sold to the Buccaneers all such stores and commodities as they stood in need of.

Ringrose, one of the Buccaneers, relates that during these communications the Governor of Panama sent to demand of their leader, "Why, during a time of peace between England and Spain, Englishmen should come into those seas to commit injury? and from whom they had their commission so to do?" Sawkins replied, "That he and his companions came to assist their friend the King of Darien, (the said chief Andreas,) who was the rightful lord of Panama, and all the country thereabouts. That as they had

come so far, it was reasonable they should receive some satisfaction for their trouble; and if the Governor would send to them 500 pieces of eight for each man, and 1,000 for each commander, and would promise not any further to annoy the Darien Indians, their allies, that then the Buccaneers would desist from hostilities, and go quietly about their business." The Governor could scarcely be expected to comply with these moderate demands.

The General Sawkins, having learned from one of the Spaniards who traded with the Buccaneers that the Bishop of Panama was a person whom he had formerly taken prisoner in the West Indies, sent him a small present as a token of regard and old acquaintanceship: the Bishop in return sent Sawkins a gold ring!

Having consumed all the live stock within reach, and tired of waiting for the rich ship from Peru, the Buccaneers sailed on the 15th of May to the island of Otoque, where they found hogs and poultry, and rested a day. From Otoque they departed with three ships and two small barks, steering out of the bay of Panama, and then westward for the town of Pueblo Nuevo. In this short voyage a violent storm separated from the ships two of the barks, which never joined them again. One of them was taken by the Spaniards, who shot the men; and the crew of the other contrived to reach Coxon's party, and to recross the isthmus with them. On reaching Pueblo Nuevo, the Buccaneers, instead of meeting with an easy prize, sustained a complete discomfiture, and lost their brave commander Sawkins, who was shot dead by the Spaniards as he was advancing at the head of his men towards a breastwork. "Captain Sawkins," says his comrade Ringrose, "was a valiant and generous-spirited man, and beloved more than any other we ever had among us, which he well deserved." His

loss not only disheartened the whole, but induced between sixty and seventy men, and all the Darien Indians, to abandon the expedition and return to the Isthmus.

Only one hundred and forty-six Buccaneers now remained with Bartholomew Sharp, whom they had chosen commander, but who, though clerk enough to write and publish, on his return to England, a very readable account of his adventures, did not at first shine as a leader.

In their retreat from Pueblo Nuevo they took a ship loaded with indigo, butter, and pitch, and burned two others. They lay at anchor for some time at the island of Quibo, where they pleasantly and profitably employed their time in taking "red deer, turtle, and oysters so large that they were obliged to cut them into four quarters, each quarter being a good mouthful."

On the 6th of June, Sharp, who had boasted he would "take them a cruise, whereby he doubted not they would gain a thousand pounds per man," sailed with two ships for the coast of Peru. But on the 17th he came to anchor at the island of Gorgona, where the Buccaneers idled away their time till near the end of July, doing nothing worthy of mention, except killing "a snake eleven feet long, and fourteen inches in circumference."

On the 13th of August they got as far as the island Plata, where Sharp again came to anchor. From Plata they beat to the south, and on the 25th, when near Cape St. Elena, they captured, after a short contest, in which one Buccaneer was killed and two were wounded, a Spanish ship bound for Panama. In this prize they found 3,000 dollars. The ship they sank, but it is not said what they did with the crew;

as, however, Ringrose makes particular mention that they "punished a friar and shot him upon deck, casting him overboard while he was yet alive," it is to be presumed he was the only sufferer, and that the crew were kept to work as seamen or servants, or in hopes that they might be ransomed, or merely until some convenient opportunity were found for dismissing them.

One of the two vessels in which the Buccaneers cruised was now found to sail so badly, that she was abandoned, and they all embarked together in the Trinidad.

On the 4th of September they took another ship, bound for Lima. It appears here to have been a custom among the Buccaneers, that the first who boarded should be allowed some extra privilege of plunder; for Ringrose says, "we cast dice for the first entrance, and the lot fell to the larboard watch, so twenty men belonging to that watch entered her."

They took out of this prize as much of the cargo as suited them; they then put some of their prisoners in her, and dismissed her with only one mast standing and one sail.

Sharp passed Callao at a distance, fearing the Spaniards might have ships of war there. On the 26th of October he attempted a landing at the town of Arica, but was prevented by a heavy surf, and the armed appearance of the place. This was the more mortifying, as the stock of fresh water was so reduced, that the men were only allowed half a pint a day each; and it is related that a pint of water was sold in the ship for thirty dollars. They bore away, however, for the Island of Ilo, where they succeeded in landing, and obtained water, wine, flour, fruit, and other provisions, and did all the mischief they could to the houses and plantations, because the Spaniards

refused to purchase their forbearance either with money or cattle.

From Ilo, keeping still southward, they came, on the 3rd of December, to the town of La Serena, which they took without opposition. They here obtained, besides other things, five hundred pounds, weight of silver, but were very near having their ship burned by a desperate Spaniard, who went by night on a float made of a horse's hide, blown up like a bladder, and crammed oakum and brimstone, and other combustible matters, between the rudder and the stern-post, to which he set fire by a match, and then escaped.

From La Serena the Buccaneers made for Juan Fernandez, at which interesting, romantic island, they arrived on Christmas-day, and remained some time. Here they again disagreed, some of them wishing to sail immediately homeward by the Strait of Magalhanes, and others desiring to try their fortune longer in the South Sea. Sharp was of the homeward party; but the majority being against him, deposed him from the command, and elected in his stead John Watling, "an old privateer, and esteemed a stout seaman." Articles between Watling and the crew were drawn up in writing, and subscribed in due form.

One narrative, however, says, "the true occasion of the grudge against Sharp was, that he had got by these adventures almost a thousand pounds, whereas many of our men were scarce worth a groat; and good reason there was for their poverty, for at the Isle of Plata, and other places, they had lost all their money to their fellow Buccaneers at dice; so that some had a great deal, and others just nothing. Those who were thrifty sided with Captain Sharp, but the others, being the greatest number, turned Sharp out of his command; and Sharp's party were persuaded to have patience, seeing they were the fewest, and

had money to lose, which the other party had not." But Dampier says, Sharp was dismissed the command by general consent, the Buccaneers being satisfied neither with his courage nor his conduct.

John Watling, as Richard Sawkins before him, had a glimmering of devotion in his composition. He began his command by insisting on the observance of the Lord's day by the Buccaneers. "This day, January the 9th, 1681," says Ringrose, "was the first Sunday that ever we kept by command, since the loss and death of our valiant commander Captain Sawkins, who once threw the dice overboard, finding them in use on the said day."

On the 12th of January they were scared away from their anchorage at Juan Fernandez by the appearance of three sail, and left behind them, on shore, William, a Musquito Indian.

The three vessels, whose appearance had caused them to move in such a hurry, were armed Spanish ships. They remained in sight two days, but showed no inclination to fight. The Buccaneers had not a single great gun in their ship, and must have trusted to their musketry and to boarding; yet it seems they must have contemplated making an attack themselves, as they remained so long without resigning the honour of the field to the Spaniards. They then sailed eastward for the coast of the continent, where they intended to attack the rich town of Arica.

On the 26th of January they made the small island of Yqueque, about twenty-five leagues from Arica, where they plundered an Indian village of provisions, and made prisoners of two old Spaniards and two Indians. The next day Watling examined one of the old Spaniards concerning the force at Arica, and, taking offence at his answer, ordered him to be shot—which was done! Shortly after he took a small bark, laden with fresh water for the little island, which was destitute of it.

The next night Watling, with one hundred men, left the ship in the boats and the small bark they had taken, and rowed for Arica. They landed on the continent, about five leagues to the south of Arica, before it was light, and remained there all day concealed among the rocks. When the shades of night fell, they crept along the coast without being perceived, and at the next morning dawn Watling landed with ninety-two men. They were still four miles from the town, but they marched boldly and rapidly forward, and gained an entrance with the loss of three men killed and two wounded. Though in possession of the town, Watling neglected a fort or little castle, and when he had lost time and was hampered by the number of prisoners he had made for the sake of their ransom, and the inhabitants had recovered from their first panic, and had thrown themselves into the fort, he found that place too strong for him. He attacked it, however, making use of the cruel expedient of placing his prisoners in front of his own men; but the defenders of the fort, though they might kill countrymen, friends, and relatives, were not by this deterred, but kept up a steady fire, and twice repulsed the Buccaneers. Meanwhile the Spaniards outside of the fort made head from all parts, and hemmed in the Buccaneers, who, from assailants, found themselves obliged to look for their own defence and retreat. Watling paid for his imprudence with his life, and two quarter-masters, the boatswain, and some of the best men among the rovers, fell before the fort. When the rest withdrew from the town, and made for their boats, they were harassed the whole way by a distant firing from the Spaniards, but they effected their retreat in tolerably good order. The whole party, however, narrowly escaped destruction; for the Spaniards had forced from the prisoners they took the signals which had been agreed upon with the men

left four miles off in charge of the Buccaneer boats ; and, having made these signals, the boats had quitted their post, to which the rovers were now retreating, and were setting sail to run down to the town, when the most swift of foot of the band reached the sea-side just in time to call them back. They embarked in the greatest hurry, and ran for their ships, too much disheartened to attempt to capture three vessels that lay at anchor in the roads.

In this mismanaged attack on Arica, the Buccaneers lost, between killed and taken, twenty-eight men, besides having eighteen wounded. Among the prisoners taken by the Spaniards were two surgeons, to whom had been confided the care of the wounded. " We could have brought off our doctors," says Ringrose, " but they got to drinking while we were assaulting the fort, and, when we called to them, they would not come. The Spaniards gave quarter to the surgeons, they being able to do them good service in that country ; but, as to the wounded men taken prisoners, they were all knocked on the head ! "

The deposed chief, Barty Sharp, was now reinstated in the command, being esteemed a leader of safer conduct than any other. It was unanimously agreed to quit the South Sea, which they proposed to do, not by sailing round the American continent by the Strait of Magalhanes, but by re-crossing the isthmus of Darien. They did not, however, immediately alter their course, but, still beating to the South, landed on the 10th of March at Guasco, whence they carried off one hundred and twenty sheep, eighty goats, two hundred bushels of corn, and a plentiful supply of fresh water. They then stood to the north, and on the 27th passed Arica at a respectful distance : " our former entertainment," says one of the Buccaneers, " having been so very bad, that we were no ways encouraged to stop there again."

By the 16th of April, however, when they were near the island Plata, where on a former occasion many of them "had lost their money to their fellow Buccaneers at dice," the spirits of some of the crew had so much revived, that they were again willing to try their fortunes longer in the South Sea. But one party would not continue under Sharp, and others would not recognise a new commander. As neither party would yield, it was determined to separate, and agreed, "that which party soever upon polling should be found to have the majority should keep the ship." Sharp's party proved the most numerous, and they kept the vessel. The minority, which consisted of forty-four Europeans, two Mosquito Indians, and a Spanish Indian, took the long boat and the canoes, as had been agreed, and, separating from their old comrades, proceeded to the gulf of San Miguel, where they landed, and travelled on foot over the isthmus by much the same route as they had come. From the Atlantic side of the isthmus they found their way to the West Indies. In this seceding party were the two authors, William Dampier and Lionel Wafer, the surgeon. Dampier published a brief sketch of this Expedition to the South Sea, with an account of his return across the isthmus; but, of the latter, the most entertaining description was written by Wafer, who, meeting with an accident on his journey back, which disabled him from keeping pace with his countrymen, was left behind, and remained for some months the guest of the Darien Indians. Living among them as he did, he had ample opportunity of informing himself of all their manners and customs, and I know no book that gives so complete and amusing a picture of the habits of savage life, unless it be the volume on the New Zealanders*.

* Published by the "Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge."

Sharp, with his diminished crew, which must have been reduced to about seventy men, sailed with the ship northward to the gulf of Nicoya. Meeting no booty there, he returned to the island Plata, picking up three prizes in his way. The first was a ship called the San Pedro, with a lading of cocoa-nuts, and 21,000 pieces of eight in chests, and 16,000 in bags, besides plate. The money in bags, with all the loose plunder, was immediately divided, each man receiving 234 pieces of eight. The money in chests was reserved for a future division. Their second prize was a packet from Panama bound to Callao, by which they learned that in Panama it was believed that all the Buccaneers had returned overland to the West Indies. The third was a ship called the San Rosario, which made a bold resistance, and did not submit until her captain was killed. She came from Callao, with a cargo of wine, brandy, oil, and fruit, and had in her as much money as yielded ninety-four dollars to each Buccaneer. Through their ignorance of metals they missed a much greater booty. There were 700 pigs of plate which they mistook for tin, on account of its not being refined and fitted for coining. They only took one of the seven hundred pigs, and two-thirds of this they melted down into bullets, and otherwise squandered away. After having beaten along the coast, coming at times to anchor, making a few discoveries, and giving names to islands and bays, but taking no prizes, they sailed early in November from the shores of Patagonia. Their navigation hence, as Captain Burney remarks, was more than could be imagined; it was like the journey of travellers by night in a strange country without a guide. The weather being very stormy, they were afraid to venture through the strait of Magalhanes, but ran to the south to go round the Tierra del Fuego. Spite of tempests, clouds, and darkness, and immense ice-

bergs, they doubled in safety the redoubtable Cape Horn, nine months after their comrades, who went back by the isthmus of Darien, had left them.

On the 5th of December they made a division of such of their spoils as had been reserved. Each man's share amounted to 328 pieces of eight.

On January the 28th, 1682, they made the island of Barbadoes, where the British frigate Richmond was lying. "We having acted in all our voyage without a commission," says Ringrose, "dared not be so bold as to put in, lest the said frigate should seize us for privateering, and strip us of all we had got in the whole voyage." They, therefore, sailed to Antigua. People may say what they choose about the virtues of old times! It is a notorious fact, that statesmen and the servants of government were in those days corrupt, rapacious, dishonest. It seems to have been an established practice among the Buccaneers to purchase impunity by bribing our governors of the West India islands. But at Antigua, Sharp now found, as Governor, Colonel Codrington, an honest man, who would not allow his lady to accept of a present of jewels sent by the Buccaneers as a propitiatory offering, nor give the Buccaneers leave to enter the harbour. The Buccaneers then separated. Some stole into Antigua on board of other craft; Sharp and some others landed at Nevis, whence they procured a passage to England. Their ship, the *Trinidad*, which they had captured in the Bay of Panama, was left to seven desperadoes of the company, who having lost every farthing by gaming, had no inducement to lead them to England, but remained where they were, in the hope of picking up new associates, with whom they might again try their fortunes as free rovers.

When Bartholomew Sharp arrived in England, he and a few of his men were apprehended and brought before a Court of Admiralty, where, at the instance

of the Spanish ambassador, they were tried for piracies in the South Sea. One of the principal charges against them was taking the Spanish ship Rosario, and killing the Captain and one of her men: "But it was proved," says the author of an anonymous narrative, who was one of the Buccaneers tried, "that the Spaniards fired at us first, and it was judged that we ought to defend ourselves." I can hardly understand how it should have been so, but it is said, from the general defectiveness of the evidence produced, they all escaped conviction.

Three of Sharp's men were also tried at Jamaica, one of whom, "being wheedled into an open confession, was condemned and hanged; the other two stood it out, and escaped for want of witnesses to prove the fact against them."

"Thus terminated," adds Captain Burney, "what may be called the First Expedition of the Buccaneers in the South Sea; the boat excursion by Morgan's men in the Bay of Panama being of too little consequence to be so reckoned. They had now made successful experiments of the route both by sea and land; and the Spaniards in the South Sea had reason to apprehend a speedy renewal of their visit."

And indeed their visit was repeated the very next year. "On August the 23rd, 1683," says William Dampier, who had not had enough of his first expedition, "we sailed from Virginia, under the command of Captain Cook, bound for the South Seas." Their adventurous, dangerous mode of life must have had strong charms for them, for besides Dampier and Cook, Lionel Wafer, Edward Davis, and Ambrose Cowley, went for the second time, and indeed nearly all of their crew, amounting to about seventy men, were old Buccaneers.

Their ship was called the *Revenge*, and mounted

eighteen guns: an immense superiority over the craft with which they had already scoured those seas, and which had not even a single large gun on board.

Quite enough has been said to give the reader a notion of the mode of proceeding and living of these marauders. Without including an account of the discoveries they made in the South Sea, and the additions Dampier and Wafer procured to our knowledge of the natural history of those parts of the globe, and of the manners and habits of the savages who inhabited them, a continuation of the narrative of the Buccaneers would be monotonous; and to include these would occupy too much space, and not be germane to a work like the present. I will, therefore, mention only a few particulars, and hasten to the extinction of these extraordinary associations.

When the *Revenge* got into the South Sea, they were surprised to find another English ship there. This ship had been fitted out in the river Thames, under a pretence of trading, but with the intention of making a piratical voyage. Her commander was one John Eaton, who readily agreed to keep company with Cook. Cook died in July, just as they made Cape Blanco, and Edward Davis, the second in command, was unanimously elected to succeed him. This man, though a Buccaneer, had many good and some great qualities. Humane himself, he repressed the ferocity of his companions; he was prudent, moderate, and steady; and such was his commanding character, and the confidence his worth and talent inspired, that no rival authority was ever set up against him, but the lawless and capricious freebooters obeyed him implicitly in all that he ordered. For a long while he maintained his sway, not only over the two ships already mentioned, but over another English vessel, and over two hundred French, and eighty English Buccaneers

that crossed the isthmus of Darien, and joined him, besides other parties that went from time to time to try their fortunes in the South Seas.

By far the most interesting incident in the history of these marauders is found in this their second expedition in the Pacific.

On their first cruise, when under the command of Watling, the Buccaneers having been suddenly scared away from the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez by the appearance of three armed Spanish ships, left behind them one William, an Indian of the Mosquito tribe, whose attachment to the English adventurers has been mentioned. The poor fellow was absent in the woods, hunting goats for food for the Buccaneers at the time of the alarm, and they could spare no time to search after him. When this second expedition came near Juan Fernandez, on March 22nd, 1684, several of the Buccaneers who had been with Watling, and were still attached to their faithful Indian comrade William, were eager to discover if any traces could be found of him on the island, and accordingly made for it in great haste in a row-boat.

In this boat was Dampier, who, marauder though he was, has described the scene with exquisite simplicity and feeling, and Robin a Mosquito Indian. As they approached the shore, to their astonishment and delight they saw William at the sea-side waiting to receive them.

“Robin, his countryman,” says Dampier, “was the first who leaped ashore from the boat, and, running to his brother Mosquito man, threw himself flat on his face at his feet, who, helping him up and embracing him, fell flat with his face on the ground at Robin’s feet, and was by him taken up also. We stood with pleasure to behold the surprise, tenderness, and solemnity of this interview, which was exceedingly affectionate on both sides; and when their ceremonies

were over, we, also, that stood gazing at them, drew near, each of us embracing him we had found here, who was overjoyed to see so many of his old friends come hither, as he thought, purposely to fetch him."

William had by this time lived in utter solitude for more than three years. The Spaniards knew that he had been left behind in the island, and several ships of that nation had stopped there and sent people in pursuit of him, but he, dreading they would put him to death as an ally of their persecutors, the English Buccaneers, had each time fled and succeeded in concealing himself from their search.

When his friends first sailed away and left him at Juan Fernandez, William had with him a musket, a small horn of powder, a few shot, and a knife. "When his ammunition was expended," continues Dampier, "he contrived, by notching his knife, to saw the barrel of his gun into small pieces, where-with he made harpoons, lances, hooks, and a long knife, heating the pieces of iron first in the fire, and then hammering them out as he pleased with stones. This may seem strange to those not acquainted with the sagacity of the Indians; but it is no more than what the Mosquito men were accustomed to in their own country." He had worn out the English clothes with which he had landed, and now had no covering save a goat-skin round his waist. For fishing, he made lines from seal-skins cut into thongs. "He had built himself a hut, half a mile from the sea-shore, which he lined with goats'-skins, and slept on his couch or *barbecu* of sticks raised about two feet from the ground, and spread with goats'-skins." He saw the Buccaneers' ships the day before, and with his quick sight perceived at a great distance that, from their rigging and manner of manœuvring, they must be English; he therefore killed three goats, which he dressed with vegetables, and when his friends

and liberators landed he had a feast ready prepared for them.

After having cruised for four years, Davis and many of his companions returned to the West Indies in 1688, in time to benefit by a proclamation offering the King's pardon to all Buccaneers who would claim it and quit their lawless way of life. "It was not," says Captain Burney, "the least of fortune's favours to this crew, that they should find it in their power, without any care or forethought of their own, to terminate a long course of piratical adventures in quietness and security."

By a short time after the return of Davis all the Buccaneers, both French and English, had quitted the South Sea, most of them having effected a retreat across the isthmus, in which they met with some most desperate adventures. They continued their depredations for a few years longer in the West Indian seas and on the coasts of the Spanish main, but they never returned to the Pacific.

On the accession of William III. a war between Great Britain and France, that had been an unusually long time at peace with each other, seemed inevitable. The French in the West Indies did not wait for its declaration, but attacked the English portion of St. Christopher, which island, by joint agreement, had been made the original and confederated settlement of the two nations. The English were forced to retire to the island of St. Nevis. The war between France and England, which followed, lasted till nearly the end of William's reign. The old ties of amity were rent asunder, and the Buccaneers, who had been so long leagued against the Spaniards, now carried arms against each other, the French acting as auxiliaries to the regular forces of their nation, the English fighting under the royal flag of theirs. They never again confederated in any

Buccaneer cause. Had they been always united and properly headed—had conquest and not plunder been their object, they might gradually have obtained possession of a great part of the West Indies—they might at once have established an independent state among the islands of the Pacific Ocean.

The treaty of Ryswick, which was signed in September, 1697, and the views of the English and French cabinets as regarded Spain, and then, four years later, the accession of a Bourbon Prince to the Spanish throne, led to the final suppression of these marauders. Many of them turned planters or negro drivers, or followed their profession of sailors on board of merchant vessels; but others, who had good cruising ships, quitted the West Indies, separated, and went roving to different parts of the globe. "Their distinctive mark, which they undeviatingly preserved nearly two centuries, was their waging constant war against the Spaniards, and against them only."—Now this was obliterated, and they no longer existed as Buccaneers.

I conclude with the words of Captain Burney, in which will be found a melancholy truth, but which, I hope, from the amelioration of our Colonial governments and our general improvement, will soon, as regards Englishmen and present times, appear like a falsehood.

"In the history of so much robbery and outrage, the rapacity shown in some instances by the European Governments in their West Indian transactions, and by Governors of their appointment, appears in a worse light than that of the Buccaneers, from whom, they being professed ruffians, nothing better was expected. The superior attainments of Europeans, though they have done much towards their own civilization, chiefly in humanizing their institutions, have, in their dealings with the inhabitants of the

rest of the globe, with few exceptions, been made the instruments of usurpation and extortion.

“After the suppression of the Buccaneers, and partly from their relics, arose a race of pirates of a more desperate cast, so rendered by the increased danger of their occupation, who for a number of years preyed upon the commerce of all nations, till they were hunted down, and, it may be said, exterminated.”

THE ABBÉ DE VATTEVILLE.

ALL my readers will remember that there has been a doubt expressed, whether or not a dignitary of the English Church had not been in early life a Buccaneer and a robber. I say all will remember it, because Lord Byron alludes to the circumstance in a note to “The Corsair,” one of the finest of his poems.

As, however, the passage is short as it is curious, I will quote it here.

“In Noble’s continuation of Granger’s Biographical History there is a singular passage in his account of Archbishop Blackbourne; and, as in some measure connected with the profession of the hero of the foregoing poem, I cannot resist the temptation of extracting it:—‘There is something mysterious in the history and character of Dr. Blackbourne. The former is but imperfectly known; and report has even asserted he was a Buccaneer; and that one of his brethren in that profession having asked, on his arrival in England, what had become of his old chum, Blackbourne, was answered, he is Archbishop of York. We are informed, that Blackbourne was

installed sub-dean of Exeter in 1694, which office he resigned in 1702; but after his successor Lewis Barnet's death, in 1704, he regained it. In the following year he became dean; and in 1714 held with it the archdeanery of Cornwall. He was consecrated bishop of Exeter, February 24, 1716; and translated to York, November 28, 1724, as a reward, according to court scandal, for uniting George I. to the Duchess of Munster. This, however, appears to have been an unfounded calumny. As archbishop he behaved with great prudence, and was equally respectable as the guardian of the revenues of the see. Rumour whispered he retained the vices of his youth, and that a passion for the fair sex formed an item in the list of his weaknesses; but so far from being convicted by seventy witnesses, he does not appear to have been directly criminated by one. In short, I look upon these aspersions as the effects of mere malice. How is it possible a Buccaneer should have been so good a scholar as Blackbourne certainly was? He who had so perfect a knowledge of the classics (particularly of the Greek tragedian) as to be able to read them with the same ease as he could Shakspeare, must have taken great pains to acquire the learned languages, and have had both leisure and good masters. But he was undoubtedly educated at Christ-church College, Oxford. He is allowed to have been a pleasant man; this, however, was turned against him, by its being said, 'he gained more hearts than souls.'"

If the identification cannot be established in the case of our countryman Archbishop Blackbourne, the French Church offers a most remarkable and well-authenticated instance of a murderer, a renegado, and a worse than robber, who attained eminence in the Catholic hierarchy.

I translate the wonderful history of this successful and remorseless villain as it is given in that rich mine

of contemporary biography and history, the Memoirs of the Duke of St. Simon.

“The death of the Abbé de Vatteville made less noise (in the year 1702), but the prodigy of his life merits to be mentioned. He was the brother of the Baron de Vatteville, ambassador of Spain in England, who, at London, in October 1661, offered a sort of insult to the Count, since Maréchal d’Estrades, ambassador of France, touching the etiquette of precedence.

“These Vattevilles are people of quality of the Franche Comté. This youngest son became a monk of the order of the Carthusians in very early life, and after his profession was ordained as priest. He had a deal of wit and spirit; but a spirit free and impetuous, which soon became impatient of the monastic yoke to which he had submitted. Incapable of remaining any longer in subjection to such annoying observances, he deliberated on the means of liberating himself from them. He found means to procure private clothes to wear instead of his monkish garb; and, moreover, some money, pistols, and a horse, that was to be in waiting for him at a short distance from the monastery. He had not been able to do all this without exciting some suspicion. His superior, indeed, suspected him, when one night, as he was between sleep and awake, Vatteville stole into his room. The prior feigned to be fast asleep, and the monk retreated from his bedside with a key that opened one of the outer gates of the monastery. Shortly after the prior went with a *passe-partout*, and opened the door of his cell, when he found Vatteville dressed in his secular clothes on a rope-ladder, with which he was going to climb the walls. Hereupon the prior begins to cry out aloud, and Vatteville shoots him dead with a pistol, and escapes. Two or three days after he stops to dine at a mean public-house, situated alone in a

solitary part of the country, for he had avoided as much as he could stopping at inhabited places; he dismounts, and asks what there is in the larder? The host replies, a leg of mutton and a capon. 'Bah!' answers my unfrocked monk, 'put them both on the spit.' The host would represent to him that a leg of mutton and a capon are too much for one man, and that, these gone, there is nothing else in the house. The monk becomes angry, and tells him that when a man can pay, the least he can expect is to have what he wishes, and that his appetite is good enough to eat both. The host does not dare reply, and puts the leg of mutton and the capon down to the fire. As these two roasts were done, there comes another man on horseback, and also alone, to dine at the cabaret. He asks what there is to eat, and is told there is nothing but what he sees just ready to be taken from the spit. He then inquires how many persons is this ordered for, and is very much astonished that it should be all for one man. He proposes, in paying his portion, to partake of this dinner; and he is still more surprised at the answer of the host, who assures him he doubts whether this will be allowed, judging from the air of the person who had first ordered the dinner. On this the traveller goes up-stairs, civilly addresses Vatteville, and begs he will condescend to let him dine with him, paying of course his share, as there is nothing in the house except what he has ordered. Vatteville will not consent to this: a dispute begins—becomes warm; brief, the monk deals with him as he had done with his superior, and kills his man with a pistol-shot. He then tranquilly goes down-stairs, and in the midst of the affright of the host, and of all the people about the inn, orders up his leg of mutton and his capon, which he eats to the very bones, pays his bill, mounts his horse, and is off.

“Not knowing what to do with himself, he goes to the Turks; and to be short, he gets himself circumcised, puts on the turban, and enters their army. His renegation advances him; his wit and his valour distinguish him, and he becomes a Pasha, and a confidential man in the Morea, where the Turks were carrying on war against the Venetians. He took several fortified places, and conducted himself so well with the Turks, that he believed himself in a position to take advantage of his circumstances, in which he could not be comfortable. He found the means of addressing the Government of the Republic, and of making his bargain with them. He promised verbally to give up several fortresses, and to make them acquainted with numerous secrets of the Turks, on condition that they should procure and bring him, in all and its best forms, the absolution of his Holiness the Pope for the sundry misdeeds of his life, his murders, his apostacy—an entire security against the Carthusians; an assurance that he should not be given over to any other monastic order, but fully restored to the secular condition, with all the rights of those who never quitted it, and fully reinstated in the exercise of his order of priesthood, with a faculty of possessing all sorts of benefices. The Venetians too well found their account in this to attempt to spare themselves, and the Pope believed the interest of the Church great enough to favour the Christians against the Turks; with a good grace he granted all the demands of the Pasha. When Vatteville was well assured that all these representations had reached the Government in the best form, he took his measures so well that he perfectly executed all that he had engaged to do for the Venetians. As soon as he had done this, he went over to the Venetian army, then embarked on board of one of their ships, which carried him to Italy. He went to Rome, the Pope received

him well ; and fully reassured, he returned to Franche Comté to the bosom of his family, where he amused himself by spiting the Carthusians.

“ These singular events of his life made him much known at the first conquest of the Franche Comté : he was thought a man of address and intrigue ; he closely connected himself with the Queen-mother, then with Ministers, who adroitly made use of him at the second conquest of the same province. He rendered great services, but not for nothing. He had stipulated for the Archbishopric of Besançon, and in effect, after the second conquest, he was named to it. The Pope could not make up his mind to the giving Vatteville the necessary Bulls, but exclaimed against the atrocity of his murders, his apostacy, and circumcision. The King entered into the reasons of the Pope, and he capitulated with the Abbé de Vatteville, who contented himself with the Abbey of Beaume, the half of Franche Comté, an intermediate property in Picardy, and sundry other advantages. He afterwards lived in his Abbey of Beaume, part of his time on his estates, sometimes at Besançon, but rarely at Paris and the court, where he was always received with distinction.

“ He had, wherever he went, numerous equipages and attendants, a splendid establishment, fine packs of hounds, a sumptuous table, and good company. He put himself under no restraint as regarded women, and lived not only *en grand seigneur*, much feared, and much respected, but, after the ancient fashion, tyrannizing over the people on his estates, those about his Abbey, and sometimes over his neighbours ; above all, he was very absolute in his own house. The Intendants of the Province bent their shoulders, and by express orders of the Government, as long as he lived, let him do as he chose, and dared not oppose him in anything ; neither as to the taxes, which he

regulated as he thought fit in all the territories depending on him, nor as to any of his enterprises, which were frequently most violent ones. With these morals and with this comportment, that made him be feared and respected, he delighted, at times, to go and see the Carthusians, in order that he might glorify himself on having thrown off their hood. He was a rare good player at the game of ombre, and so frequently gained *codille*, that he was nicknamed from that circumstance L'Abbé Codille. He lived in this style, and always with the same licence, and in the same high consideration, nearly to the age of ninety. The grandson of Vatteville's brother, after an interval of many years, married a half-sister of Monsieur du Maurepas*."

 CHINESE PIRATES.

THE Celestial Empire, spite of the boasted wisdom of its government, and the virtue and order that have been supposed to reign there for so many centuries, is no more free from robbers than countries of less ancient date and inferior pretension. On the contrary, if we except India and her Pindarries, no part of the world has, in our time, witnessed such formidable and numerous associations of freebooters. These Chinese robbers were pirates, and I am disposed to give a sketch of them and their adventures, as a striking *pendant* to the preceding chapter on the Buccaneers of South America; and this, because I am not only in possession of a most curious account of the suppression or pacification of the rovers, translated from the original Chinese, but of a corroboration written

* Mémoires du Duc St. Simon, vol. iii, p. 239.

by an Englishman, who was so unfortunate as to fall into their hands, and to see his comrades (English sailors) obliged to take part in their marauding and murderous expeditions.

For the translation of *Yuen Tsze's* "History of the Pirates who infested the China Sea from 1807 to 1810," we are indebted to that excellent institution the Oriental Translation Fund, and to the labours of the distinguished Orientalist Mr. Charles Fried Neumann; and for the Narrative * of his captivity and treatment amongst the Ladrones (pirates), to Richard Glasspoole, Esq. of the Hon. East India Company's service, a gentleman who is still living. I shall make out my account of the Chinese pirates from either of these two authorities, without copying them both, or quoting from them in any other order than what suits the convenience of the narrative.

The Ladrones, as they were christened by the Portuguese of Macao, were originally a disaffected set of Chinese, that revolted against the oppression of the Mandarins. The first scene of their depredations was the Western coast, about Cochin-China, where they began by attacking small trading vessels in row-boats, carrying from thirty to forty men each. They continued this system of piracy, and thrived and increased in numbers under it, for several years. At length the fame of their successes, and the oppression and horrid poverty and want that many of the lower order of Chinese laboured under, had the effect of augmenting their bands with astonishing rapidity. Fishermen and other destitute classes flocked by hundreds to their standard, and their audacity growing with their numbers, they not merely swept the coast, but blockaded all the principal rivers, and attacked and took several large government war junks, mounting from ten to fifteen guns each.

* First published in Wilkinson's Travels to China.

These junks being added to their shoals of boats, the pirates formed a tremendous fleet, which was always along shore, so that no small vessel could safely trade on the coast. When they lacked prey on the sea, they laid the land under tribute. They were at first accustomed to go on shore and attack the maritime villages, but becoming bolder, they, like the Buccaneers, made long inland journeys, and surprised and plundered even large towns.

An energetic attempt made by the Chinese government to destroy them, only increased their strength; for in their very first rencounter with the pirates, twenty-eight of the Imperial junks struck, and the remaining twelve saved themselves by a precipitate retreat.

The captured junks, fully equipped for war, were a great acquisition to the robbers, whose numbers now increased more rapidly than ever. They were in their plenitude of power in the year 1809, when Mr. Glasspoole had the misfortune to fall into their hands, at which time, that gentleman supposed their force to consist of 70,000 men, navigating eight hundred large vessels, and one thousand small ones, including row-boats. They were divided into six large squadrons, under different flags;—the red, the yellow, the green, the blue, the black, and the white. “These wasps of the ocean,” as the Chinese historian pertinently calls them, were further distinguished by the names of their respective commanders. Of these commanders a certain *Ching-yih* had been the most distinguished by his valour and conduct. By degrees Ching obtained almost a supremacy of command over the whole united fleet; and so confident was this robber in his strength and daily augmenting means, that he aspired to the dignity of a great political character, and went so far as openly to declare his patriotic intention of hurling the present Tartar family from the throne of

China, and of restoring the ancient native Chinese dynasty.

But unfortunately for this ambitious pirate, "it happened that on the seventeenth day of the tenth moon, in the twentieth year of Këa-King," he perished in a heavy gale, and instead of placing a sovereign on the Chinese throne, he and his lofty aspirations were buried in the sea of China. And now comes the most remarkable passage in the history of these pirates—remarkable with any class of men, but doubly so among the Chinese, who entertain more than the general oriental opinion of the inferiority, or nothingness, of the fair sex.

On the death of *Ching-yih*, his legitimate wife had sufficient influence over the freebooters to induce them to recognize her authority in the place of her deceased husband's; and she appointed one *Paou* as her lieutenant and prime minister, and provided that she should be considered the mistress or the commander-in-chief of the united squadrons.

This *Paou* had been a poor fisher-boy, picked up with his father at sea, while fishing, by *Ching-yih*, whose good will and favour he had the fortune to captivate, and by whom, before that pirate's death, he had been made a headman or captain. The grave Chinese historian does not descend into such domestic particulars, but we may presume, from her appointing him to be her lieutenant, that *Paou* had been equally successful in securing the good graces of *Mistress Ching*, (as the worthy translator somewhat irreverently styles our Chinese heroine).

Instead of declining under the rule of a woman, the pirates became more enterprising than ever. Ching's widow was clever as well as brave, and so was her lieutenant *Paou*. Between them they drew up a code of laws for the better regulation of their freebooters.

In this it was decreed, that if any man went privately on shore, or did what they called "transgressing the bars," he should have his ears slit in the presence of the whole fleet; a repetition of the same unlawful act was death! No one article, however trifling in value, was to be privately subtracted from the booty or plundered goods. Every thing they took was regularly entered on the register of their stores. The pirates were to receive in due proportion, out of this common fund, their shares, or what they stood in need of, and any one of them purloining any thing from this general fund, was to be punished with death. (These regulations of the Chinese pirates correspond with those in force among the Buccaneers; when the latter robbers had taken a prize, each man held up his hand, and swore he had secreted nothing for his private advantage. Similar arrangements will be found to have existed among all predatory associations, and only prove how soon even the most lawless bodies of men must feel the necessity of something like law among themselves.) The following clause of Mistress Ching's code is still more delicate.

"No person shall abuse at his pleasure captive women, taken in the villages and open places, and brought on board a-ship. To use violence against any woman, or to wed her, without permission, shall be punished with death."

That the pirates might never feel the want of provisions and other supplies, it was ordered by Ching-yih's widow, that every thing should be done to gain the common country people to their interest. Wine, rice, and all other goods were to be paid for, as the villagers delivered them; capital punishment was pronounced on every pirate who should take any thing of this kind by force, or without paying for it. And not only were these laws well calculated for their object, but the she-commander-in-chief and her lieutenant

Paou were vigilant in seeing them observed, and strict in every transaction.

By these means an admirable discipline was maintained on board the ships, and the peasantry on shore never let the pirates want for gunpowder, provisions, or any other necessary. On a piratical expedition, either to advance or to retreat without orders, was a capital offence.

Under these philosophical institutions, and the guidance of a woman, the robbers continued to scour the China sea, plundering every vessel they came near; but it is to be remarked, in their delicate phraseology, the robbing of a ship's cargo was not called by any such vulgar term—it was merely styled “a transshipping of goods.”

According to our Chinese historian *Yuen Tsze*, who shows throughout an inclination to treat *Paou* as Homer did some of his doughtier heroes, the herculean lieutenant gained an increase of reputation by lifting up himself, in the Temple dedicated to the “Three Old Women,” on the sea coast, a heavy image, which all the men together who accompanied him could not so much as move from its base. By the lieutenant's orders, this cumbrous statue was carried aboard ship, where the superstitious pirates dreaded from the wrath of the idol, or the Three Old Women, an inevitable and general death in the next storm or next fight. It did not, however, so turn out; for a few months after, when the great war Mandarin Kwolang-lin, sailed from the Bocca Tigris into the sea to fight the pirates, *Paou*, the idol-lifter and lieutenant of Ching-yih's widow, gave him a tremendous drubbing, and gained a splendid victory. In this battle, which lasted from morning till night, the Mandarin Kwolang-lin, a desperate fellow himself, levelled a gun at *Paou*, who fell on his deck as the piece went off; his disheartened crew concluded it was all over with

him, and that the "Three Old Women" had had their spite. But Paou was quick-eyed as he was strong-limbed; he had seen the unfriendly intention of the Mandarin, and thrown himself down; but no sooner had the shot gone over him, than he "stood up again, firm and upright, so that all thought he was a spirit." The great Mandarin who had meant him this ugly compliment, was soon after, with fifteen of his junks (three others had been sunk) taken prisoner. The pirate lieutenant-chief would have dealt mercifully with him, but the fierce old man suddenly seized him by the hair on the crown of his head, and grinned at him, so that he might provoke him to slay him. But even then Paou was moderate, speaking kindly to the old Mandarin, and trying to soothe him. Upon this, "Kwolang-lin, seeing himself deceived in his expectation, and that he could not attain death by such means, committed suicide—being then a man of seventy years of age."

"There were in this battle," continues the Chinese historian, "three of my friends; the lieutenant Tao-tae-lin, Tsao-tang-hoo, and Ying-tang-hwang, serving under the former. Lin and Hoo were killed, but Hwang escaped when all was surrounded with smoke, and he it was who told me the whole affair."

Not long after, another great Mandarin, called Lin-fa, who went out to wage war against the pirates, was equally unsuccessful. He no sooner came in sight of those he was looking for, than his fleet, panic struck at their numbers and martial appearance, changed their tack, and tried to run back to port. But the fleet of Mistress Ching and her bold lieutenant were too quick for the Imperial forces. They came up with them near a place called Olan-pae, and there, their vessels being rendered motionless by a dead calm, the daring pirates threw themselves into the sea, and swimming to the Manda-

rin's ships, boarded and took six of them. The Mandarin was killed.

In the next adventure on record, a party of the pirates sustained a rude check from a lofty argoisie, laden with goods from Cochin-China and Tung King, and were obliged to retire to their boats: "a circumstance," saith the historian, "which never happened before."

In the action after this, they were still more severely handled. The great Admiral Tsuen-Mow-Sun proceeded with a hundred vessels to attack the pirates, who did not retreat, but drew up in line of battle, and made a tremendous attack on the imperial fleet, where an immense number fell, between killed and wounded. The ropes and sails* having been set on fire by the guns of the Emperor's ships, the pirates became exceedingly afraid, and took them away. The Admiral directed his fire against their steerage, that they might not be able to steer their vessels. Being very close one to the other, the pirates were exposed to the fire of all the four lines of the Admiral's fleet at once.

The pirates opened their eyes in astonishment, and fell down; the Chinese commander advanced courageously, laid hold of their vessels, killed an immense number of men, and took about two hundred prisoners. "There was a pirate's wife in one of the boats, holding so fast by the helm, that she could scarcely be taken away. Having two cutlasses, she desperately defended herself, and wounded some soldiers; but on being wounded by a matchlock ball, she fell back into the vessel, and was taken prisoner."

But the tarnished laurels of the pirates were soon brightened; for when the said Tsuen-mow-Sun went

* It must be remembered that the Chinese sails are nothing more than mats.

to attack them in the bay of Kwang-chow, the widow of Ching-yih remaining quiet with part of her ships, sent her bold lieutenant Paou to make an attack on the front of the Admiral's line. When the fight was well begun, the rest of the pirate's ships, that had been lying *perdus*, came upon the Admiral's rear, and presently surrounded him.—“Then,” saith the historian, “our squadron was scattered, thrown into disorder, and consequently cut to pieces: there was a noise which rent the sky; every man fought in his own defence, and scarcely a hundred remained together. The squadron of the wife of Ching-yih overpowered us by numbers; our commander was not able to protect his lines, they were broken, and we lost fourteen ships.”

The next fight being very characteristically described, must be given entire in the words of our Chinese historian.

“Our men of war escorting some merchant ships, in the fourth moon of the same year, happened to meet the pirate chief nicknamed ‘The Jewel of all the Crew,’ cruising at sea. The traders became exceedingly frightened, but our commander said: ‘This not being the flag of the widow Ching-yih, we are a match for them, therefore we will attack and conquer them.’ Then ensued a battle; they attacked each other with guns and stones, and many people were killed and wounded. The fighting ceased towards the evening, and began again next morning. The pirates and the men-of-war were very close to each other, and they boasted mutually about their strength and valour. It was a very hard fight; the sound of cannon, and the cries of the combatants, were heard some *le** distant. The traders remained at some distance; they saw the pirates mixing gunpowder in

* *Le*, a Chinese mile.—“I compute,” says Bell, “five of their miles to be about two and a half English.”

their beverage,—they looked instantly red about the face and the eyes, and then fought desperately. This fighting continued three days and nights incessantly ; at last, becoming tired on both sides, they separated.”

To understand this inglorious bulletin, the reader must remember that many of the combatants only handled bows and arrows, and pelted stones, and that Chinese powder and guns are both exceedingly bad. The bathos of the conclusion does somewhat remind one of the Irishman's despatch during the American war—“It was a bloody battle while it lasted ; and the serjeant of marines lost his cartouche-box.”

The pirates continuing their depredations, plundered and burned a number of towns and villages on the coast, and carried off a number of prisoners of both sexes. From one place alone, they carried off fifty-three women.

The Admiral Ting Kwei was then sent to sea against them. This man was surprised at anchor by the ever vigilant and active Paou, to whom many fishermen, and other people on the coast, must have acted as friendly spies. Seeing escape impossible, and that his officers stood pale and inactive by the flag staff, the Admiral conjured them, by their fathers and mothers, their wives and children, and by hopes of brilliant reward if they succeeded, and of vengeance if they perished, to do their duty, and the combat began. The admiral had the good fortune, at the onset, of killing with one of his great guns the pirate captain, “the Jewel of all the Crew ;” but the robbers swarmed thicker and thicker around him, and when the dreaded Paou lay him by the board, without help or hope, the Mandarin killed himself. An immense number of his men perished in the sea, and twenty-five vessels were lost.

After this defeat it was resolved by the Chinese Government to cut off all their supplies of provision, and, if possible, starve the pirates. All vessels that were in port, of whatsoever kind they might be, were ordered to remain there, and those at sea, or on the coast, speedily to return. The Government officers, for once, seem to have done their duty, and been very vigilant; but the pirates, full of confidence, now resolved to attack the harbours themselves, and to ascend the rivers, which are navigable for many miles up the country, and on which the most prosperous towns and villages are generally situated.

The Canton river discharges itself into the sea by many channels, through three of which the robbers forced their passage. Hitherto they had robbed in the open sea outside the Canton river, and when the Chinese thus saw them venturing above the Government forts, and threatening the defenceless inland country, their consternation was greater than ever.

The pirates separated: Mistress Ching plundering in one place; Paou, in another; O-po-tae, in another, &c.

It was at this time that Mr. Glasspoole had the ill fortune to fall into their power. This gentleman, then an officer in the East India Company's ship the *Marquis of Ely*, which was anchored under an island about twelve miles from Macao, was ordered to proceed to the latter place with a boat to procure a pilot. He left the ship in one of the cutters, with seven British seamen well-armed, on the 17th September 1809. He reached Macao in safety, and having done his business there and procured a pilot, returned towards the ship the following day. But unfortunately, the ship had weighed anchor and was under sail, and in consequence of squally weather, accompanied with thick fogs, the boat could not reach her, and Mr. Glasspoole and his men and the pilot were left at sea,

in an open boat. "Our situation," says that gentleman, "was truly distressing—night closing fast, with a threatening appearance, blowing fresh, with hard rain and a heavy sea; our boat very leaky, without a compass, anchor, or provisions, and drifting fast on a lee-shore, surrounded with dangerous rocks, and inhabited by the most barbarous pirates."

After suffering dreadfully for three whole days, Mr. Glasspoole, by the advice of the pilot, made for a narrow channel, where he presently discovered three large boats at anchor, which, on seeing the English boat, weighed and made sail towards it. The pilot told Mr. Glasspoole they were Ladrones, and that if they captured the boat, they would certainly put them all to death! After rowing tremendously for six hours they escaped these boats, but on the following morning falling in with a large fleet of the pirates, which the English mistook for fishing-boats, they were captured.

"About twenty savage-looking villains," says Mr. Glasspoole, "who were stowed at the bottom of a boat, leaped on board us. They were armed with a short sword in either hand, one of which they laid upon our necks, and pointed the other to our breasts, keeping their eyes fixed on their officer, waiting his signal to cut or desist. Seeing we were incapable of making any resistance, the officer sheathed his sword, and the others immediately followed his example. They then dragged us into their boat, and carried us on board one of their junks, with the most savage demonstrations of joy, and, as we supposed, to torture and put us to a cruel death."

When on board the junk they rifled the Englishmen, and brought heavy chains to chain them to the deck.

"At this time a boat came, and took me, with one of my men and the interpreter, on board the chief's vessel. I was then taken before the chief. He was

seated on deck, in a large chair, dressed in purple silk, with a black turban on. He appeared to be about thirty years of age, a stout commanding-looking man. He took me by the coat, and drew me close to him; then questioned the interpreter very strictly, asking who we were, and what was our business in that part of the country. I told him to say we were Englishmen in distress, having been four days at sea without provisions. This he would not credit, but said we were bad men, and that he would put us all to death; and then ordered some men to put the interpreter to the torture until he confessed the truth. Upon this occasion, a Ladrone, who had been once to England and spoke a few words of English, came to the chief, and told him we were really Englishmen, and that we had plenty of money, adding that the buttons on my coat were gold. The chief then ordered us some coarse brown rice, of which we made a tolerable meal, having eaten nothing for nearly four days, except a few green oranges. During our repast, a number of Ladrones crowded round us, examining our clothes and hair, and giving us every possible annoyance. Several of them brought swords, and laid them on our necks, making signs that they would soon take us on shore, and cut us in pieces, which I am sorry to say was the fate of some hundreds during my captivity. I was now summoned before the chief, who had been conversing with the interpreter; he said I must write to my captain, and tell him, if he did not send an hundred thousand dollars for our ransom, in ten days he would put us all to death."

After vainly expostulating to lessen the ransom, Mr. Glasspoole wrote the letter, and a small boat came alongside and took it to Macao.

"About six o'clock in the evening they gave us some rice and a little salt fish, which we ate, and they made signs for us to lie down on the deck to sleep;

but such numbers of Ladrones were constantly coming from different vessels to see us; and examine our clothes and hair, they would not allow us a moment's quiet. They were particularly anxious for the buttons of my coat, which were new, and as they supposed gold. I took it off, and laid it on the deck to avoid being disturbed by them; it was taken away in the night, and I saw it on the next day stripped of its buttons."

Early in the night the fleet sailed and anchored about one o'clock the following day in a bay under the island of Lantow, where the head admiral of Ladrones (our acquaintance Paou) was lying at anchor, with about two hundred vessels and a Portuguese brig they had captured a few days before, and the captain and part of the crew of which they had murdered. Early the next morning, a fishing-boat came to inquire if they had captured an European boat; they came to the vessel the English were in.

"One of the boatmen spoke a few words of English, and told me he had a Ladrone-pass, and was sent by our captain in search of us; I was rather surprised to find he had no letter. He appeared to be well acquainted with the chief, and remained in his cabin smoking opium, and playing cards all the day. In the evening I was summoned with the interpreter before the chief. He questioned us in a much milder tone, saying, he now believed we were Englishmen, a people he wished to be friendly with; and that if our captain would lend him seventy thousand dollars till he returned from his cruise up the river, he would repay him, and send us all to Macao. I assured him it was useless writing on those terms, and unless our ransom was speedily settled, the English fleet would sail, and render our enlargement altogether ineffectual. He remained determined, and said if it were not sent, he would keep us, and make us fight, or put us

to death. I accordingly wrote, and gave my letter to the man belonging to the boat before-mentioned. He said he could not return with an answer in less than five days. The chief now gave me the letter I wrote when first taken. I have never been able to ascertain his reasons for detaining it, but suppose he dared not negotiate for our ransom without orders from the head admiral, who I understood was sorry at our being captured. He said the English ships would join the Mandarins and attack them."

While the fleet lay here, one night the Portuguese who were left in the captured brig murdered the *Ladrones* that were on board of her, cut the cables, and fortunately escaped through the darkness of the night.

"At day-light the next morning, the fleet, amounting to above five hundred sail of different sizes, weighed, to proceed on their intended cruise up the rivers, to levy contributions on the towns and villages. It is impossible to describe what were my feelings at this critical time, having received no answers to my letters, and the fleet under-way to sail—hundreds of miles up a country never visited by Europeans, there to remain probably for many months, which would render all opportunities of negotiating for our enlargement totally ineffectual; as the only method of communication is by boats that have a pass from the *Ladrones*, and they dare not venture above twenty miles from Macao, being obliged to come and go in the night, to avoid the Mandarins; and if these boats should be detected in having any intercourse with the *Ladrones*, they are immediately put to death, and all their relations, though they had not joined in the crime*, share in the punishment, in order that not a

* That the whole family must suffer for the crime of one individual, seems to be the most cruel and foolish law of the whole Chinese criminal code.

single person of their families should be left to imitate their crimes or revenge their death.”

The following is a very touching incident in Mr. Glasspoole's narrative :—

“ Wednesday the 26th of September, at day-light, we passed in sight of our own ships, at anchor under the island of Chun Po. The chief then called me, pointed to the ships, and told the interpreter to tell us to look at them, for we should never see them again! About noon we entered a river to the westward of the Bogue*, three or four miles from the entrance. We passed a large town situated on the side of a beautiful hill, which is tributary to the Ladrones; the inhabitants saluted them with songs as they passed.”

After committing numerous minor robberies, “The Ladrones now prepared to attack a town with a formidable force, collected in row-boats from the different vessels. They sent a messenger to the town, demanding a tribute of ten thousand dollars annually, saying, if these terms were not complied with, they would land, destroy the town, and murder all the inhabitants: which they would certainly have done, had the town laid in a more advantageous situation for their purpose; but being placed out of the reach of their shot, they allowed them to come to terms. The inhabitants agreed to pay six thousand dollars, which they were to collect by the time of our return down the river. This finesse had the desired effect, for during our absence they mounted a few guns on a hill, which commanded the passage, and gave us in lieu of the dollars a warm salute on our return.

“ October the 1st, the fleet weighed in the night, dropped by the tide up the river, and anchored very quietly before a town surrounded by a thick wood. Early in the morning the Ladrones assembled in row-

* The Hoo-mun, or Bocca Tigris.

boats, and landed; then gave a shout, and rushed into the town, sword in hand. The inhabitants fled to the adjacent hills, in numbers apparently superior to the Ladrones. We may easily imagine to ourselves the horror with which these miserable people must be seized, on being obliged to leave their homes, and everything dear to them. It was a most melancholy sight to see women in tears, clasping their infants in their arms, and imploring mercy for them from those brutal robbers! The old and the sick, who were unable to fly, or to make resistance, were either made prisoners or most inhumanly butchered! The boats continued passing and repassing from the junks to the shore, in quick succession, laden with booty; and the men besmeared with blood! Two hundred and fifty women, and several children, were made prisoners, and sent on board different vessels. They were unable to escape with the men, owing to that abominable practice of cramping their feet; several of them were not able to move without assistance, in fact, they might all be said to totter, rather than walk. Twenty of these poor women were sent on board the vessel I was in; they were hauled on board by the hair, and treated in a most savage manner. When the chief came on board, he questioned them respecting the circumstances of their friends, and demanded ransoms accordingly, from six thousand to six hundred dollars each. He ordered them a berth on deck, at the after part of the vessel, where they had nothing to shelter them from the weather, which at this time was very variable—the days excessively hot, and the nights cold, with heavy rains. The town being plundered of every thing valuable, it was set on fire, and reduced to ashes by the morning. The fleet remained here three days negotiating for the ransom of the prisoners, and plundering the fish-tanks and gardens. During all this time,

the Chinese never ventured from the hills, though there were frequently not more than a hundred Ladrones on shore at a time, and I am sure the people on the hills exceeded ten times that number*.

“October the 5th, the fleet proceeded up another branch of the river, stopping at several small villages to receive tribute, which was generally paid in dollars, sugar, and rice, with a few large pigs roasted whole, as presents for their Joss (the idol they worship).† Every person, on being ransomed, is obliged to present him with a pig, or some fowls, which the priest offers him with prayers; it remains before him a few hours, and is then divided amongst the crew. Nothing particular occurred till the 10th, except frequent skirmishes on shore between small parties of Ladrones and Chinese soldiers. They frequently obliged my men to go on shore, and fight with the muskets we had when taken, which did great execution, the Chinese principally using bows and arrows. They have match-locks, but use them very unskillfully.

“On the 10th, we formed a junction with the Black-squadron, and proceeded many miles up a wide and beautiful river, passing several ruins of villages that had been destroyed by the Black-squadron. On the 17th, the fleet anchored abreast four mud batteries, which defended a town, so entirely surrounded with wood that it was impossible to form any idea of its size. The weather was very hazy, with hard squalls of rain. The Ladrones remained perfectly quiet for two days. On the third day the forts commenced a brisk fire for several hours; the Ladrones did not return a single shot, but weighed in the night

* The following is the character of the Chinese of Canton, as given in ancient Chinese books:—“People of Canton are silly, light, weak in body, and weak in mind, without any ability to fight on land.”—The Indo-Chinese Gleaner, No. 19.

† Joss is a Chinese corruption of the Portuguese Dios, God.

and dropped down the river. The reasons they gave for not attacking the town, or returning the fire, were, that Joss had not promised them success. They are very superstitious, and consult their idol on all occasions. If his omens are good, they will undertake the most daring enterprises. The fleet now anchored opposite the ruins of the town where the women had been made prisoners. Here we remained five or six days, during which time about an hundred of the women were ransomed; the remainder were offered for sale amongst the Ladrones, for forty dollars each. The woman is considered the lawful wife of the purchaser, who would be put to death if he discarded her. Several of them leaped overboard and drowned themselves, rather than submit to such infamous degradation."

Our friend Yuen-tsze, the native Chinese historian of the pirates, from whom I have quoted so copiously, agrees very closely; in all this river warfare and carrying off women, with Mr. Glasspoole's account. At this particular part of the warfare he introduces the following story:—

"Mei-ying, the wife of Ke-choo-yang, was very beautiful, and a pirate being about to seize her by the head, she abused him exceedingly. The pirate bound her to the yard-arm; but on abusing him yet more, the pirate dragged her down and broke two of her teeth, which filled her mouth and jaws with blood. The pirate sprang up again to bind her. Ying allowed him to approach, but as soon as he came near her, she laid hold of his garments with her bleeding mouth, and threw both him and herself into the river, where they were drowned. The remaining captives of both sexes were after some months liberated, on having paid a ransom of fifteen thousand leang or ounces of silver."

So much was the sage historian affected by this event, that he became poetical. "I was affected," he says, "by the virtuous behaviour of Mei-ying, and all generous men will, as I suppose, be moved by the same feelings. I, therefore, composed a song, mourning her fate :—

"Cease fighting now for awhile !
 Let us call back the flowing waves !
 Who opposed the enemy in time ?
 A single wife could overpower him.
 Streaming with blood, she grasped the mad offspring of guilt ;
 She held fast the man and threw him into the meandering stream.
 The spirit of the water, wandering up and down on the waves,
 Was astonished at the virtue of Ying.
 My song is at an end !
 Waves meet each other continually.
 I see the water green as mountain Peih,
 But the brilliant fire returns no more !
 How long did we mourn and cry !"

"I am compelled," says the ingenious translator, M. Neumann, "to give a free translation of this verse, and confess myself not quite certain of the signification of the poetical figures used by our author."

We in our turn must *confess* that we cannot make much sense of his version.

"The fleet then weighed," continued Mr. Glasspoole, "and made sail down the river, to receive the ransom from the town before-mentioned. As we passed the hill, they fired several shot at us, but without effect. The Ladrones were much exasperated, and determined to revenge themselves ; they dropped out of reach of their shot, and anchored. Every junk sent about a hundred men each on shore, to cut paddy, and destroy their orange groves, which was most effectually performed for several miles down the river. During our stay here, they received informa-

tion of nine boats lying up a creek, laden with paddy : boats were immediately dispatched after them. Next morning these boats were brought to the fleet ; ten or twelve men were taken in them. As these had made no resistance, the chief said he would allow them to become Ladrones, if they agreed to take the usual oaths before Joss. Three or four of them refused to comply, for which they were punished in the following cruel manner : their hands were tied behind their backs, a rope from the mast-head rove through their arms, and hoisted three or four feet from the deck, and five or six men flogged them with three rattans twisted together till they were apparently dead ; then hoisted them up to the mast-head, and left them hanging nearly an hour, then lowered them down and repeated the punishment, till they died or complied with the oath.

“ October the 20th, in the night, an express-boat came with the information that a large Mandarin fleet was proceeding up the river to attack us. The pirate chief immediately weighed, with fifty of the largest vessels, and sailed down the river to meet them. About one in the morning they commenced a heavy fire till day-light, when an express was sent for the remainder of the fleet to join them : about an hour after a counter-order to anchor came, the Mandarin fleet having run. Two or three hours afterwards the chief returned with three captured vessels in tow, having sunk two, and eighty-three sail made their escape. The admiral of the Mandarins blew his vessel up, by throwing a lighted match into the magazine as the Ladrones were boarding her ; she ran on shore, and they succeeded in getting twenty of her guns. In this action very few prisoners were taken : the men belonging to the captured vessels drowned themselves, as they were sure of suffering a lingering and cruel death if taken after making resistance.”

Passing over some personal concerns of the unfortunate English captives, we come to the following disagreeable dilemma, and adventures.

“On the 28th of October, I received a letter from Captain Kay, brought by a fisherman, who had told him he would get us all back for three thousand dollars. He advised me to offer three thousand, and if not accepted, extend it to four; but not farther, as it was bad policy to offer much at first: at the same time assuring me we should be liberated, let the ransom be what it would. I offered the chief the three thousand, which he disdainfully refused, saying he was not to be played with; and unless they sent ten thousand dollars, and two large guns, with several casks of gunpowder, he would soon put us all to death. I wrote to Captain Kay, and informed him of the chief's determination, requesting, if an opportunity offered, to send us a shift of clothes, for which it may be easily imagined we were much distressed, having been seven weeks without a shift; although constantly exposed to the weather, and of course frequently wet.

“On the first of November, the fleet sailed up a narrow river, and anchored at night within two miles of a town called Little Whampoa. In front of it was a small fort, and several Mandarin vessels lying in the harbour. The chief sent the interpreter to me, saying, I must order my men to make cartridges and clean their muskets, ready to go on shore in the morning. I assured the interpreter I should give the men no such orders, that they must please themselves. Soon after the chief came on board, threatening to put us all to a cruel death if we refused to obey his orders. For my own part I remained determined, and advised the men not to comply, as I thought by making ourselves useful, we should be accounted too valuable. A few hours afterwards he sent to me again, saying, that if myself and the quarter-master would assist them at

the great guns, that if also the rest of the men went on shore and succeeded in taking the place, he would then take the money offered for our ransom, and give them twenty dollars for every Chinaman's head they cut off. To these proposals we cheerfully acceded, in hopes of facilitating our deliverance."

Preferring the killing of Chinese to the living with pirates, our English tars therefore landed next day with about 3000 ruffians. Once in the fight, they seem to have done their work *con amore!* and to have battled it as if they had been pirates themselves. Our friend, the Chinese historian, indeed, mentions a foreigner engaged in battle and doing great execution with a little musket, and sets him down, naturally enough, as a foreign pirate!"

"The Mandarin vessels continued firing, having blocked up the entrance of the harbour to prevent the Ladrone boats entering. At this the Ladrones were much exasperated, and about three hundred of them swam on shore, with a short sword lashed close under each arm; they then ran along the banks of the river till they came abreast of the vessels, and then swam off again and boarded them. The Chinese, thus attacked, leaped overboard, and endeavoured to reach the opposite shore; the Ladrones followed, and cut the greater number of them to pieces in the water. They next towed the vessels out of the harbour, and attacked the town with increased fury. The inhabitants fought about a quarter of an hour, and then retreated to an adjacent hill, from which they were soon driven with great slaughter. After this the Ladrones returned, and plundered the town, every boat leaving it when laden. The Chinese on the hills perceiving most of the boats were off, rallied, and re-took the town, after killing nearly two hundred Ladrones. One of my men was unfortunately lost in this dread-

ful massacre! The Ladrones landed a second time, drove the Chinese out of the town, then reduced it to ashes, and put all their prisoners to death, without regarding either age or sex! I must not omit to mention a most horrid (though ludicrous) circumstance which happened at this place. The Ladrones were paid by their chief ten dollars for every Chinaman's head they produced. One of my men turning the corner of a street was met by a Ladrone running furiously after a Chinese; he had a drawn sword in his hand, and two Chinamen's heads which he had cut off, tied by their tails, and slung round his neck. I was witness myself to some of them producing five or six to obtain payment!

“On the 4th of November, an order arrived from the Admiral for the fleet to proceed immediately to Lantow, where he was lying with only two vessels, and three Portuguese ships and a brig constantly annoying him; several sail of Mandarin vessels were daily expected. The fleet weighed and proceeded towards Lantow. On passing the island of Lintin, three ships and a brig gave chase to us. The Ladrones prepared to board; but night closing we lost sight of them: I am convinced they altered their course and stood from us. These vessels were in the pay of the Chinese Government, and styled themselves the Invincible Squadron, cruising in the river Tigris to annihilate the Ladrones!

“On the fifth, in the morning, the red squadron anchored in a bay under Lantow; the black squadron stood to the eastward. In the afternoon of the 8th of November, four ships, a brig, and a schooner came off the mouth of the bay. At first the pirates were much alarmed, supposing them to be English vessels come to rescue us. Some of them threatened to hang us to the mast-head for them to fire at; and with

much difficulty we persuaded them that they were Portuguese. The Ladrones had only seven junks in a fit state for action; these they hauled outside, and moored them head and stern across the bay, and manned all the boats belonging to the repairing vessels ready for boarding. The Portuguese observing these manœuvres hove to, and communicated by boats. Soon afterwards they made sail, each ship firing her broadside as she passed, but without effect, the shot falling far short. The Ladrones did not return a single shot, but waved their colours, and threw up rockets, to induce them to come further in, which they might easily have done, the outside junks lying in four fathoms water, which I sounded myself: though the Portuguese in their letters to Macao lamented there was not sufficient water for them to engage closer, but that they would certainly prevent their escaping before the Mandarin fleet arrived!

“ On the 20th of November, early in the morning, discovered an immense fleet of Mandarin vessels standing for the bay. On nearing us, they formed a line, and stood close in; each vessel, as she discharged her guns, tacked to join the rear and reload. They kept up a constant fire for about two hours, when one of their largest vessels was blown up by a firebrand thrown from a Ladrone junk; after which they kept at a more respectful distance, but continued firing without intermission till the 21st at night, when it fell calm. The Ladrones towed out seven large vessels, with about two hundred row-boats, to board them; but a breeze springing up, they made sail and escaped. The Ladrones returned into the bay, and anchored. The Portuguese and Mandarins followed, and continued a heavy cannonading during that night and the next day. The vessel I was in had her foremast shot away, which they supplied very expeditiously by taking a mainmast from a smaller vessel.

“ On the 23rd, in the evening, it again fell calm ; the Ladrones towed out fifteen junks in two divisions, with the intention of surrounding them, which was nearly effected, having come up with and boarded one, when a breeze suddenly sprang up. The captured vessel mounted twenty-two guns. Most of her crew leaped overboard ; sixty or seventy were taken, immediately cut to pieces, and thrown into the river. Early in the morning the Ladrones returned into the bay, and anchored in the same situation as before. The Portuguese and Mandarins followed, keeping up a constant fire. The Ladrones never returned a single shot, but always kept in readiness to board, and the Portuguese were careful never to allow them an opportunity.

“ On the 28th, at night, they sent in eight fire-vessels, which if properly constructed must have done great execution, having every advantage they could wish for to effect their purpose ; a strong breeze and tide directly into the bay, and the vessels lying so close together that it was impossible to miss them. On their first appearance, the Ladrones gave a general shout, supposing them to be Mandarin vessels on fire, but were very soon convinced of their mistake. They came very regularly into the centre of the fleet, two and two, burning furiously ; one of them came alongside of the vessel I was in, but they succeeded in booming her off. She appeared to be a vessel of about thirty tons ; her hold was filled with straw and wood, and there were a few small boxes of combustibles on her deck, which exploded alongside of us without doing any damage. The Ladrones, however, towed them all on shore, extinguished the fire, and broke them up for fire-wood. The Portuguese claim the credit of constructing these destructive machines, and actually sent a dispatch to the Governor of Macao, saying they had destroyed at least one-third

of the Ladrones' fleet, and hoped soon to effect their purpose by totally annihilating them !

“ On the 29th of November, the Ladrones being all ready for sea, they weighed and stood boldly out, bidding defiance to the invincible squadron and imperial fleet, consisting of ninety-three war-junks, six Portuguese ships, a brig and a schooner. Immediately the Ladrones weighed, they made all sail. The Ladrones chased them two or three hours, keeping up a constant fire ; finding they did not come up with them, they hauled their wind, and stood to the eastward. Thus terminated the boasted blockade, which lasted nine days, during which time the Ladrones completed all their repairs. In this action not a single Ladrone vessel was destroyed, and their loss about thirty or forty men. An American was also killed, one of three that remained out of eight taken in a schooner. I had two very narrow escapes : the first, a twelve-pounder shot fell within three or four feet of me ; another took a piece out of a small brass-swivel on which I was standing. The chief's wife * frequently sprinkled me with garlic-water, which they considered an effectual charm against shot. The fleet continued under sail all night, steering towards the eastward. In the morning they anchored in a large bay surrounded by lofty and barren mountains.

“ On the 2nd of December I received a letter from Lieutenant Maughn, commander of the Honourable Company's cruiser Antelope, saying that he had the ransom on board, and had been three days cruising after us, and wished me to settle with the chief on the securest method of delivering it. The chief agreed to send us in a small gun-boat till we came within sight of the Antelope ; then the compradore's boat

* Probably the wife of Ching-yih, whose family name was Shih, or stone.

was to bring the ransom and receive us. I was so agitated at receiving this joyful news, that it was with considerable difficulty I could scrawl about two or three lines to inform Lieutenant Maughn of the arrangements I had made. We were all so deeply affected by the gratifying tidings, that we seldom closed our eyes, but continued watching day and night for the boat.

“ On the 6th she returned with Lieutenant Maughn’s answer, saying, he would respect any single boat ; but would not allow the fleet to approach him. The chief then, according to his first proposal, ordered a gun-boat to take us, and with no small degree of pleasure we left the Ladrone fleet about four o’clock in the afternoon. At one P.M. saw the Antelope under all sail, standing towards us. The Ladrone boat immediately anchored, and dispatched the compradore’s boat for the ransom, saying, that if she approached nearer, they would return to the fleet ; and they were just weighing when she shortened sail, and anchored about two miles from us. The boat did not reach her till late in the afternoon, owing to the tide’s being strong against her. She received the ransom, and left the Antelope, just before dark. A Mandarin boat that had been lying concealed under the land, and watching their manœuvres, gave chase to her, and was within a few fathoms of taking her, when she saw a light, which the Ladrones answered, and the Mandarin hauled off. Our situation was now a most critical one ; the ransom was in the hands of the Ladrones, and the compradore dared not return with us for fear of a second attack from the Mandarin boat. The Ladrones would not remain till morning, so we were obliged to return with them to the fleet. In the morning the chief inspected the ransom, which consisted of the following articles : two bales of superfine scarlet cloth ; two chests of opium ;

two casks of gunpowder ; and a telescope ; the rest in dollars. He objected to the telescope not being new ; and said he should detain one of us till another was sent, or a hundred dollars in lieu of it. The com-pradore, however, agreed with him for the hundred dollars. Every thing being at length settled, the chief ordered two gun-boats to convey us near the Antelope ; we saw her just before dusk, when the Ladrone boats left us. We had the inexpressible pleasure of arriving on board the Antelope at seven P. M., where we were most cordially received, and heartily congratulated on our safe and happy deliverance from a miserable captivity, which we had endured for eleven weeks and three days.

(Signed) "RICHARD GLASSPOOLE.

"CHINA, December 8th, 1809."

The following notes, added to Mr. Glasspoole's very interesting account of these Eastern pirates, will show how ill he fared during his detention among them, and that, with all their impunity of plundering, their lives were but wretched and beastly.

"The Ladrones have no settled residence on shore, but live constantly in their vessels. The after-part is appropriated to the captain and his wives ; he generally has five or six. With respect to conjugal rights, they are religiously strict ; no person is allowed to have a woman on board, unless married to her according to their laws. Every man is allowed a small berth, about four feet square, where he stows with his wife and family. From the number of souls crowded in so small a space, it must naturally be supposed they are horridly dirty, which is evidently the case, and their vessels swarm with all kinds of vermin. Rats in particular, which they encourage to breed, and eat them as great delicacies * ; in fact,

* The Chinese in Canton only eat a particular sort of rat, which is very large and of a whitish colour.

there are very few creatures they will not eat. During our captivity we lived three weeks on caterpillars boiled with rice. They are much addicted to gambling, and spend all their leisure hours at cards and smoking opium."

At the time of Mr. Glasspoole's liberation, the pirates were at the height of their power; after such repeated victories over the Mandarin ships, they had set at nought the imperial allies—the Portuguese, and not only the coast, but the rivers of the celestial empire seemed to be at their discretion—and yet their formidable association did not many months survive this event. It was not, however, defeat that reduced it to the obedience of the laws. On the contrary, that extraordinary woman, the widow of Ching-yih, and the daring Paou, were victorious and more powerful than ever, when dissensions broke out among the pirates themselves. Ever since the favour of the chieftainess had elevated Paou to the general command, there had been enmity and altercations between him and the chief O-po-tae, who commanded one of the flags or divisions of the fleet; and it was only by the deference and respect they both owed to Ching-yih's widow, that they had been prevented from turning their arms against each other long before.

At length, when the brave Paou was surprised and cooped up by a strong blockading force of the Emperor's ships, O-po-tae showed all his deadly spite, and refused to obey the orders of Paou, and even of the chieftainess, which were, that he should sail to the relief of his rival.

Paou, with his bravery and usual good fortune, broke through the blockade, but when he came in contact with O-po-tae, his rage was too violent to be restrained.

O-po-tae at first pleaded that his means and

strength had been insufficient to do what had been expected of him, but concluded by saying,—“Am I bound to come and join the forces of Paou?”

“Would you then separate from us!” cried Paou, more enraged than ever.

O-po-tae answered: “I will not separate myself.”

Paou:—“Why then do you not obey the orders of the wife of Ching-yih and my own? What is this else than separation, that you do not come to assist me, when I am surrounded by the enemy? I have sworn it that I will destroy thee, wicked man! that I may do away with this soreness on my back.”

The summons of Paou, when blockaded, to O-po-tae was in language equally figurative:—“I am harassed by the Government’s officers outside in the sea; lips and teeth must help one another, if the lips are cut away the teeth will feel cold. How shall I alone be able to fight the Government forces? You should therefore come at the head of your crew, to attack the Government squadron in the rear, I will then come out of my station and make an attack in front; the enemy being so taken in the front and rear, will, even supposing we cannot master him, certainly be thrown into disorder.”

The angry words of Paou were followed by others, and then by blows. Paou, though at the moment far inferior in force, first began the fight, and ultimately sustained a sanguinary defeat, and the loss of sixteen vessels. Our loathing for this cruel, detestable race, must be increased by the fact, that the victors massacred all their prisoners—or three hundred men!

This was the death-blow to the confederacy which had so long defied the Emperor’s power, and which might have effected his dethronement. O-po-tae, dreading the vengeance of Paou and his mistress,

Ching-yih's widow, whose united forces would have quintupled his own, gained over his men to his views, and proffered a submission to Government, on condition of free pardon, and a proper provision for all.

The petition of the pirates is so curious a production, and so characteristic of the Chinese, that it deserves to be inserted at length. "It is my humble opinion that all robbers of an overpowering force, whether they had their origin from this or any other cause, have felt the humanity of Government at different times. Leang-shan, who three times plundered the city, was nevertheless pardoned, and at last made a minister of state. Wa-kang often challenged the arms of his country, and was suffered to live, and at last made a corner-stone of the empire. Joo-ming pardoned seven times Mang-hwo; and Kwan-kung three times set Tsaou-tsaou at liberty. Ma-yuen pursued not the exhausted robbers; and Yo-fei killed not those who made their submission. There are many other instances of such transactions both in former and recent times, by which the country was strengthened, and government increased its power. We now live in a very populous age; some of us could not agree with their relations, and were driven out like noxious weeds. Some, after having tried all they could, without being able to provide for themselves, at last joined bad society. Some lost their property by shipwrecks; some withdrew into this watery empire to escape from punishment. In such a way those who in the beginning were only three or five, were in the course of time increased to a thousand or ten thousand, and so it went on increasing every year. Would it not have been wonderful if such a multitude, being in want of their daily bread, had not resorted to plunder and robbery to gain their subsistence, since they could not in any other manner be saved from famine? It was from necessity that the laws of

the empire were violated, and the merchants robbed of their goods. Being deprived of our land and of our native places, having no house or home to resort to, and relying only on the chances of wind and water, even could we for a moment forget our griefs, we might fall in with a man-of-war, who with stones, darts, and guns, would knock out our brains! Even if we dared to sail up a stream and boldly go on with anxiety of mind under wind, rain, and stormy weather, we must everywhere prepare for fighting. Whether we went to the east, or to the west, and after having felt all the hardships of the sea, the night dew was our only dwelling, and the rude wind our meal. But now we will avoid these perils, leave our connexions, and desert our comrades; we will make our submission. The power of Government knows no bounds; it reaches to the islands in the sea, and every man is afraid and sighs. Oh we must be destroyed by our crimes! none can escape who opposeth the laws of Government. May you then feel compassion for those who are deserving of death; may you sustain us by your humanity!"

The Government, that had made so many lamentable displays of its weakness, was glad to make an unreal parade of its mercy. It was but too happy to grant all the conditions instantly, and, in the fulsome language of its historians, "feeling that compassion is the way of heaven—that it is the right way to govern by righteousness—it therefore redeemed these pirates from destruction, and pardoned their former crimes."

O-po-tae, however, had hardly struck his free flag, and the pirates were hardly in the power of the Chinese, when it was proposed by many that they should all be treacherously murdered. The governor happened to be more honourable and humane, or, probably,

only more politic than those who made this foul proposal—he knew that such a bloody breach of faith would for ever prevent the pirates still in arms from voluntarily submitting; he knew equally well, even weakened as they were by O-po-tae's defection, that the Government could not reduce them by force, and he thought by keeping his faith with them he might turn the force of those who had submitted against those who still held out, and so destroy the pirates with the pirates. Consequently the eight thousand men it had been proposed to cut off in cold blood were allowed to remain uninjured, and their leader, O-po-tae, having changed his name to that of Heo-bëen, or "The Lustre of Instruction," was elevated to the rank of an Imperial Officer.

The widow of Ching-yih, and her favourite Paou, continued for some months to pillage the coast, and to beat the Chinese and the Mandarins' troops and ships, and seemed almost as strong as before the separation of O-po-tae's flag. But that example was probably operating in the minds of many of the outlaws, and finally the lawless heroine herself, who was the spirit that kept the complicate body together, seeing that O-po-tae had been made a Government officer, and that he continued to prosper, began also to think of making her submission.

"I am," said she, "ten times stronger than O-po-tae, and Government will perhaps, if I submit, act towards me as they have done with O-po-tae."

A rumour of her intentions having reached shore, the Mandarins sent off a certain Chow, a doctor of Macao, "who," says the historian, "being already well acquainted with the pirates, did not need any introduction," to enter on preliminaries with them.

When the worthy practitioner presented himself to Paou, that friend concluded he had been com-

mitting some crime, and had come for safety to that general *refugium peccatorum*, the pirate fleet.

The Doctor explained, and assured the chief, that if he would submit, Government was inclined to treat him and his far more favourably and more honourably than O-po-tae. But if he continued to resist, not only a general arming of all the coast and the rivers, but O-po-tae was to proceed against him.

At this part of his narrative our Chinese historian is again so curious, that I shall quote his words at length.

‘When Fei-heung-Chow came to Paou, he said :
‘Friend Paou, do you know why I come to you?’

“Paou.—‘Thou hast committed some crime, and comest to me for protection?’

“Chow.—‘By no means.’

“Paou.—‘You will then know how it stands concerning the report about our submission, if it is true or false?’

“Chow.—‘You are again wrong here, Sir. What are you in comparison with O-po-tae?’

“Paou.—‘Who is bold enough to compare me with O-po-tae?’

“Chow.—‘I know very well that O-po-tae could not come up to you, Sir; but I mean only, that since O-po-tae has made his submission, since he has got his pardon and been created a Government officer, how would it be if you, with your whole crew, should also submit, and if his Excellency should desire to treat you in the same manner, and to give you the same rank as O-po-tae! Your submission would produce more joy to Government than the submission of O-po-tae. You should not wait for wisdom to act wisely; you should make up your mind to submit to the Government with all your followers. I will assist you in every respect; it would be the means of se-

curing your own happiness and the lives of all your adherents.'

"Chang-paou remained like a statue without motion, and Fei-heung Chow went on to say; 'You should think about this affair in time, and not stay till the last moment. Is it not clear that O-po-tae, since you could not agree together, has joined Government? He being enraged against you, will fight, united with the forces of the Government, for your destruction; and who could help you, so that you might overcome your enemies? If O-po-tae could before vanquish you quite alone, how much more can he now when he is united with Government? O-po-tae will then satisfy his hatred against you, and you yourself will soon be taken either at Wei-chow or at Neaou-chow. If the merchant-vessels of Hwy-chaou, the boats of Kwang-chow, and all the fishing-vessels unite together to surround and attack you in the open sea, you certainly will have enough to do. But even supposing they should not attack you, you will soon feel the want of provisions to sustain you and all your followers. It is always wisdom to provide before things happen; stupidity and folly never think about future events. It is too late to reflect upon events when things have happened; you should, therefore, consider this matter in time!'"

Paou was puzzled, but after being closeted for some time with his mistress, Ching-yih's widow, who gave her high permission for him to make arrangements with Doctor Chow, he said he would repair with his fleet to the Bocca Tigris, and there communicate personally with the organs of Government.

After two visits had been paid to the pirate-fleets by two inferior Mandarins, who carried the Imperial proclamation of free pardon, and who, at the order of Ching-yih's widow, were treated to a sumptuous ban-

quet by Paou, the Governor-general of the province went himself in one vessel to the pirates' ships, that occupied a line of ten *le*, off the mouth of the river.

As the governor approached, the pirates hoisted their flags, played on their instruments, and fired their guns, so that the smoke rose in clouds, and then bent sail to meet him. On this the dense population that were ranged thousands after thousands along the shore, to witness the important reconciliation, became sorely alarmed, and the Governor-general seems to have had a strong inclination to run away. But in brief space of time, the long dreaded widow of Ching-yih, supported by her Lieutenant Paou, and followed by three other of her principal commanders, mounted the side of the Governor's ship, and rushed through the smoke to the spot where his excellency was stationed; where they fell on their hands and knees, shed tears, knocked their heads on the deck before him, and received his gracious pardon, and promises for future kind treatment. They then withdrew satisfied, having promised to give in a list of their ships, and of all else they possessed, within three days.

But the sudden apparition of some large Portuguese ships, and some Government war junks, made the pirates suspect treachery. They immediately set sail, and the negotiations were interrupted for several days.

They were at last concluded, by the boldness of their female leader. "If the Governor-general," said this heroine, "a man of the highest rank, could come to us quite alone, why should not I, a mean woman, go to the officers of Government? If there be danger in it, I take it all on myself: no person among you need trouble himself about me—my mind is made up, and I will go to Canton."

Paou said—"If the widow of Ching-yih goes, we

must fix a time for her return. If this pass without our obtaining certain information, we must collect all our forces, and go before Canton : this is my opinion as to what ought to be done ; comrades, let me hear yours !”

The pirates then, struck with the intrepidity of their chieftainess, and loving her more than ever, answered, “ Friend Paou, we have heard thy opinion, but we think it better to wait for the news here, on the water, than to send the wife of Ching-yih alone to be killed.” Nor would they allow her to leave the fleet.

Matters were in this state of indecision, when the two inferior Mandarins who had before visited the pirates, ventured out to repeat their visit. These officers protested no treachery had been intended, and pledged themselves, that if the widow of Ching-yih would repair to the Governor, she would be kindly received, and every thing settled to their hearts' satisfaction.

With this, in the language of our old ballads, upspoke Mistress Ching : “ You say well, gentlemen ! and I will go myself to Canton with some other of our ladies, accompanied by you !” And accordingly she and a number of the pirates' wives with their children, went fearlessly to Canton, arranged every thing, and found they had not been deceived. The fleet soon followed. On its arrival every vessel was supplied with pork and with wine, and every man (in lieu, it may be supposed, of his share of the vessels, and plundered property he resigned) received at the same time a bill for a certain quantity of money. Those who wished it, could join the military force of Government for pursuing the remaining pirates ; and those who objected, dispersed and withdrew into the country. “ This is the manner in which the great red squadron of the pirates was pacified.”

The valiant Paou, following the example of his rival O-po-tae, entered into the service of Government, and proceeded against such of his former associates and friends as would not accept the pardon offered them. There was some hard fighting, but the two renegadoes successively took the chief Shih-Url, forced the redoubtable captain styled "The scourge of the Eastern Ocean" to surrender himself, drove "Frog's Meal," another dreadful pirate, to Manilla, and finally, and within a few months, destroyed or dissipated the "wasps of the ocean" altogether.

I have already noticed the marked intention of the Chinese historian to paint the character of Paou in a poetical or epic manner. When describing the battle with Shih-Url, he says:—

"They fought from seven o'clock in the morning till one at noon, burnt ten vessels, and killed an immense number of the pirates. Shih-Url was so weakened that he could scarcely make any opposition. On perceiving this through the smoke, Paou mounted on a sudden the vessel of the pirate, and cried out: 'I, Chang Paou, am come!' and at the same moment he cut some pirates to pieces; the remainder were then hardly dealt with. Paou addressed himself in an angry tone to Shih-Url, and said: 'I advise you to submit: will you not follow my advice? what have you to say?' Shih-Url was struck with amazement, and his courage left him. Paou advanced and bound him, and the whole crew were then taken captives.'

"From that period," saith our Chinese historian, in conclusion, "ships began to pass and repass in tranquillity. All became quiet on the rivers, and tranquil on the four seas. People lived in peace and plenty. The country began to assume a new appearance. Men sold their arms and bought oxen

to plough their fields; they burned sacrifices, said prayers on the tops of the hills, and rejoiced themselves by singing behind screens during day-time"—and, (grand climax to all!) the Governor of the province, in consideration of his valuable services in the pacification of the pirates, was allowed by an edict of the "Son of Heaven," to wear peacocks' feathers with two eyes!

THE END.







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